BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Fourth Periodical Report on Parliamentary Constituencies and Second Supplementary Report on the number of members to be returned to the Northern Ireland Assembly by each of those constituencies

Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
by Command of Her Majesty

October 1995

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Constitution

The Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland are constituted in accordance with section 2 of and Schedule I to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 as follows:

Chairman:	*	The Speaker of the House of Commons, The Rt Hon Betty Boothroyd, MP
Deputy Chairman:	†	The Hon Mr Justice Pringle
Members:		Mr D J Clement
		Mr P G Duffy
Assessors:		The Registrar General of Births and Deaths for Northern Ireland,
	ø	Dr T N Caven
		The Commissioner of Valuation for Northern Ireland, Mr D Bell
		The Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland, Mr P A Bradley, OBE
Secretary:		Mr J R Fisher

* By custom, the Deputy Chairman presided at all meetings of the Commission but Madam Speaker was kept fully informed of the progress of the work of the Commission.

† The Hon Mr Justice Pringle was appointed Deputy Chairman of the Commission on 10 September 1993 to succeed the late Mr Justice Higgins who died on 2 September 1993.

ø Dr Caven was appointed Registrar General on 11 February 1994 to succeed Mr McMurray who retired on 10 February 1994.

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1 Introduction

1. The Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland are constituted under the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, as amended and extended by the Boundary Commissions Act 1992, to keep under continuous review the representation of Northern Ireland in the House of Commons and to submit to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland periodical reports showing the constituencies into which they recommend Northern Ireland should be divided. The Commission are also required by section 28(2) of the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973 to submit a supplementary report showing the number of members which the Commission recommend should be returned to the Northern Ireland Assembly by each proposed constituency.

2. The Commission last reported on 27 October 1982. The Commission's report[1] was laid before Parliament and effect given to their recommendations without modification by Order in Council[2] approved by both Houses of Parliament and made on 22 December 1982. The Order came into operation on 5 January 1983.

3. In 1989 the Commission were asked by the Ulster Unionist Parliamentary Party if they would be prepared to consider an interim review of some constituencies to take account of significant movements of population which had occurred particularly in the Greater Belfast area. The Commission noted the effect which the drift of population away from Belfast had had upon the size of electorates in the four Belfast borough constituencies but also noted the increases there had been in the electorates of other constituencies since they last reported. These constituencies were not contiguous, and the effect of an interim review on adjacent constituencies was difficult to gauge. It was felt that an interim review could become a general review in all but name and would in any case need to be followed by a mandatory general review. Frequent changes made in boundaries could confuse the public and the Commission concluded that an interim review would be neither appropriate nor practical at that time. The Commission, nevertheless, felt that the disparities of size in electorates of constituencies were excessive and could not await the outcome of the next scheduled review of local government boundaries.

4. The Parliamentary Constituencies Act provides that, in formulating recommendations, so far as is practicable no local authority ward should be included partly in one constituency and partly in another. Accordingly, in 1990 the Commission urged the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to take steps to conduct an early and speedy review of local government boundaries. In doing so, the Commission were anxious to avoid the confusion which had been caused by the Commission's 1982 report being followed in 1984 by the report of the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner (LGBC), and effect being given to their respective recommendations. This resulted in many local authority wards being divided between constituencies, a situation which was criticised as 'irrational and unnecessary'.[3] Moreover, in 1986 the House of Commons Select Committee on Home Affairs[4] took the view that it would be undesirable for the Commission not to take account of the results of the next Local Government Boundary Review when framing their future proposals. The Commission were anxious to revert to the practice whereby their general review should follow that of the LGBC and concluded that a general review which preceded that of the LGBC would be inappropriate. The Commission were therefore grateful that the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 enabled the last local government review to be completed in June 1992 which was earlier than would otherwise have been possible.

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1 *Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland. Third Periodical Report on Parliamentary Constituencies and First Supplementary Report on The Number of Members to be returned to the Northern Ireland Assembly by each of those constituencies* (Cmnd.8753, November 1982).

2 Representation of the People. Redistribution of Seats. The Parliamentary Constituencies (Northern Ireland) Order 1982.

3 *Ninth Report of the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights: Annual Report for 1982-83,* (HC62, 1984), para 38.

4 *House of Commons Second Report from the Home Affairs Committee Session 1986-87 Redistribution of Seats,* (HC97-I, December 1986), para 3.3.

5. At the time the Commission last reported in 1982, they would not have been required to submit a further report before 1997. In 1992, however, the Commission were informed by the Secretary of State that the Government intended to bring forward a Boundary Commissions Bill. The Bill would require all four Boundary Commissions in the United Kingdom to meet new statutory deadlines and would shorten statutory intervals between reviews. The Commission were grateful for this early advice and pointed out in reply that the timing of completion of their next review would depend upon the public response to their Provisional Recommendations. The Boundary Commissions Act 1992[1] subsequently required the Commission to submit the present report not later than 31 December 1994, and thereafter to report periodically not less than eight or more than twelve years from the date of submission of their last Report. The Commission informed the Secretary of State that they could not commit themselves to completing their review by the end of 1994 in view of the procedural obligations placed on them by the 1986 Act. In particular, if the Commission published Revised Recommendations, as they did during the last periodical Review, they would be required to have regard to the nature of any representations received on those recommendations. If, having done so, and in seeking to draw up recommendations which would in their opinion command the widest possible support, the Commission formed the opinion that further Local Inquiries would be justified and caused these to be held, this would effectively prevent final decisions being reached by the Commission until 1995. In reply, the Government entirely accepted that the Commission could not guarantee in all circumstances to fulfil the time limit and that such a failure by the Commission would not, as provided for in the legislation, invalidate their Report.

6. The appointments of two members of the Commission were renewed on 4 March 1993 and the Commission gave notice by letter to the Secretary of State on 16 March 1993 of their intention to consider making a report. The Secretary of State published a copy of the notice in the Belfast Gazette on 19 March 1993. The review was drawn to the attention of Parliament[2]. As a matter of courtesy, the main political parties, Northern Ireland Members of Parliament, district councils and certain other interested bodies were informed by the Commission of their decision to commence a review.

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1 Boundary Commissions Act 1992, Section 2(2) and (3). The Commission noted that during the passage of the Bill through Parliament, the Government gave particular consideration to whether the building blocks for constructing constituencies in Northern Ireland should be district electoral areas rather than local authority wards, but that this proposal was rejected. HC Debs., Vol.210, Cols.190 to 198, 23 June 1992. The Commission refer to this later in this Report, *infra*, page 29 below.

2 HC Debs., Vol.221, Col.412, 19 March 1993, Written Answers.

2 Statutory Provisions

1. In making their recommendations, the Commission are required to give effect to the Rules for Redistribution of Seats contained in the Second Schedule to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986. These Rules are set out in Appendix A to this Report. The Rules provide that the number of constituencies in Northern lreland shall not be greater than 18 or less than 16, and shall be 17 unless it appears to the Commission that Northern lreland should for the time being be divided into 16 or (as the case may be) into 18 constituencies. The Rules also provide that so far as is practicable having regard to other Rules, no local government ward shall be included partly in one constituency and partly in another. The electorate of any constituency is required to be as near the electoral quota as practicable having regard to the appropriate Rules. However, the Commission may depart from the strict application of the Rule requiring the integrity of wards to be respected where it appears to them that a departure is desirable to avoid an excessive disparity between the electorate of any constituency and the electoral quota, or between the electorate of any constituency and that of neighbouring constituencies in Northern Ireland.

2. The Commission may also depart from the strict application of the provisions affecting the size of the electorate of any constituency and the division of wards if special geographical considerations, including in particular the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency, appear to them to render a departure desirable. And, although not under a duty to aim at giving full effect in all circumstances to all the Rules, the Commission must take account, so far as they reasonably can, of the inconveniences attendant on alterations of constituencies (other than alterations made for the purpose of avoiding wards being divided between constituencies) and of any local ties which would be broken by such alteration.

3. The electoral quota referred to is the average number of electors *per* constituency and is established by dividing the total number of parliamentary electors in Northern Ireland by the number of constituencies existing on the enumeration date. The enumeration date is the date on which notice of the Commission's intention to consider making a report is published; such notice was published on 19 March 1993.

4. The Commission also sought legal opinion as to the number of constituencies which they might recommend. They concluded, on the advice of Senior Crown Counsel, that they would be justified in recommending a number of constituencies other than 17 only to reduce or alleviate difficulties experienced in applying the Rules on the basis of 17 constituencies. Considerations relating solely to an alleged under-representation of Northern Ireland which are unconnected with any difficulty in applying the Rules do not appear to the Commission to be relevant to their task.

5. In giving effect to the Rules set out in the 1986 Act, the Commission constructed a set of principles on which to base their decisions, as follows:-

a) to adjust constituency boundaries so as to ensure that no local government wards would be split between constituencies;

b) to promote electoral equality by aiming, **in the first instance**, to restrict constituency electorates to within a tolerance of 7% above or below the electoral quota (when preparing the Third Periodical Report the Commission had worked to a tolerance of 10%);

c) to take account as far as reasonable:

   i) of inconveniences attendant on alterations of constituencies, and

   ii) of any local ties which would be broken by such alterations.

To do so, the Commission considered it necessary:

i) to have regard, as far as practicable, to existing constituency boundaries;

ii) to ensure, as far as possible, that constituency boundaries conformed to local government district (LGD) boundaries, district electoral area[1] (DEA) boundaries and other boundaries of local significance; and

iii) to respect, as far as possible, significant economic, geographical and social ties between groups of electors.

Since no two geographical areas are exactly alike, the Commission decided that they should seek to strike a careful balance when applying these principles.

1 District electoral areas are groups of wards which elect councillors to district councils.

3 Procedure

1. Notice of the Commission's intention to consider making a report was published on 19 March 1993. This then became the enumeration date for the present Review. The Chief Electoral Officer for Northern lreland, who is the electoral registration officer for the whole of Northern Ireland, confirmed to the Commission that on the enumeration date the number of parliamentary electors in Northern Ireland was 1,153,477.[1] As the number of existing constituencies was 17, the electoral quota for the purposes of the current review was 67,852. The parliamentary electorate of each existing constituency and a comparison of their respective sizes by reference to the electoral quota on the enumeration date was as follows:

Constituency	Parliamentary Electorate	Percentage +/- Electoral Quota of 67,852
Belfast East	53,226	- 21.6
Belfast North	55,169	- 18.7
Belfast South	52,326	- 22.9
Belfast West	55,416	- 18.3
East Antrim	64,654	- 4.7
East Londonderry	78,268	+15.4
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	72,289	+ 6.5
Foyle	77,169	+13.7
Lagan Valley	74,856	+10.3
Mid Ulster	70,491	+ 3.9
Newry and Armagh	69,550	+ 2.5
North Antrim	71,215	+ 5.0
North Down	70,392	+ 3.7
South Antrim	69,938	+ 3.1
South Down	78,589	+15.8
Strangford	70,836	+ 4.4
Upper Bann	69,093	+ 1.8
TOTAL	1,153,477	

2. Before formulating their proposals, the Commission, as a matter of convention, consulted the major Northern Ireland political parties on broad issues of policy and sought their general observations on any matter which it was felt the Commission should have regard to, but not on specific proposals. In doing so, the Commission adopted the practice of the other Boundary Commissions not to consider specific proposals in advance of publishing their Provisional Recommendations which it was felt should be formulated from a position of independence and impartiality, uninfluenced by any other particular viewpoint or opinion.

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1 Since the Commission last reported in 1982 the Representation of the Peoples Acts 1985 and 1989 extended the franchise for elections to Parliament to include overseas electors, that is to say, subject to certain conditions, British citizens now resident outside the United Kingdom but resident in the United Kingdom within the last 20 years.

3. Those political parties in Northern Ireland with elected representatives in Parliament or representatives in the Northern Ireland Assembly at the time the Assembly was dissolved in 1986 (or which might reasonably be expected to be represented in a future Northern Ireland Assembly) were invited to meet the Commission. Accordingly, the Commission met representatives of the -

Alliance Party for Northern Ireland
Conservative Party Northern Ireland Area Council
Sinn Fein
Social Democratic and Labour Party
Ulster Democratic Unionist Party, and
Ulster Unionist Party

at a series of meetings held in April, May and June 1993. The Commission were unable to complete this series of meetings earlier due to the intervention of the local authority elections in Northern Ireland held on 19 May 1993.

4. It was recognised at these meetings that changes were needed to equalise the electorates of constituencies. Electorates ranged from that of the Belfast South constituency which on the enumeration date was almost 23% below the electoral quota, to that of South Down which was almost 16% above the quota. Although not a unanimous view, it was put to the Commission that extending the present four Belfast borough constituencies in an even, radial fashion was likely to command greater support than reducing the number of constituencies to three. Some parties considered that urban electorates made greater demands on the time and attention of Members of Parliament than rural electorates, and consequently felt that urban constituency electorates should be smaller than average. Support was also expressed for increasing the number of constituencies in Northern Ireland to 18. An approach which kept to a minimum the division between constituencies of local government districts and district electoral areas was recommended. The balance of opinion seemed to favour a tolerance of between 7% and 10% above or below the electoral quota. Political parties also advised that radical changes should be avoided, but conceded that the Commission would need to address disparities between the electorates of the four Belfast borough constituencies and those of the East Londonderry, Foyle and South Down county constituencies. The Commission were grateful for these and other views expressed at the meetings.

5. The Commission examined considerations which arose in the course of the Third Periodical Review and views expressed during that review. Among the issues noted were the importance of market towns and hinterlands; travel to work areas; and other catchment areas. The area provision of public services was also considered, including the organisation of local government and Area Health and Social Services and Education and Libraries Boards. The existing framework of parliamentary constituencies and developments since 1982 were studied, especially relative rates of decline and growth in constituency electorates since the last review.

6. The Commission considered the policies of the other Boundary Commissions and for instance whether the Commission's proposals should allow for actual or projected change in the electorate after the start of a review. The Commission agreed that when choosing between schemes which were otherwise permissible under the Rules, account should be taken of growth in the electorate which had either occurred since the enumeration date or which they were satisfied would occur in the **near** future.

7. The Commission had the benefit of opinions and information furnished by assessors to the Commission. Schedule 1 to the 1986 Act provides that the officers of the Commission shall include as assessors, the Registrar General of Births and Deaths in Northern Ireland, the Commissioner of Valuation for Northern Ireland, and the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland. Although not an assessor, the Director and Chief Executive of Ordnance Survey of

Northern Ireland (Mr Michael Brand) was invited to be present at all meetings of the Commission attended by assessors. The Commission were grateful for the advice and assistance the Director and his staff afforded the Commission throughout the review. The case for legislation to be amended in order to include the office of Director of Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland as an assessor to the Commission is referred to later. The Commission also referred to the recent reports of the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner[1] and District Electoral Areas Commissioner[2].

8. To prepare schemes for consideration, the Commission used a geographic information system (GIS), a computerised system which integrates electoral and statistical data with an automated map-drawing facility. Hitherto, the Commission had gone about their task of preparing schemes in a fairly conventional way of using paper maps and tracing overlays for making amendments, an almost entirely paper based manual method. However, the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee discussed in 1986 the possibility of using computers to draw up constituency boundaries.[3] In deciding to get away from repetitive manual methods, the Commission had as their objectives *inter alia* shortening the time taken to prepare and consider alternative schemes, improving the quality of proposals and increasing confidence in the impartiality of the Commission's work by extending the range of options considered. The Commission were grateful for the assistance and co-operation extended to them by Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland in developing and basing the GIS at their headquarters in Stranmillis, Belfast. The facility provided access to a recognised and reliable database, the close support of professional staff responsible for developing the software, on line access to a plotting facility, as well as ready access to paper maps and other material and assistance in their interpretation. The speed and ease with which a much wider range of proposals could be prepared than would otherwise have been possible facilitated a thorough investigation of options, and enabled the Commission to perform their task more quickly, cost effectively and efficiently.[4]

9. The last review having been concluded in 1982 and there having been no interim reviews since that date, the Commission prepared an Explanatory Note to ensure that members of the public and bodies and organisations with an interest in the Commission's recommendations were fully aware of the review and the procedures involved. A copy of the Explanatory Note issued by the Commission in March 1993 is reproduced at Appendix B. A more comprehensive booklet[5] outlining the main statutory provisions and the guidelines to which the Commission work was published at the time the Commission announced their Provisional Recommendations on 20 January 1994. The booklet was intended to promote a better understanding of the purpose and procedures of the Review and assist those wishing to submit representations to the Commission.

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1 *Review of Local Government Boundaries. Report by the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner, Dr M N Hayes* (HMSO, June 1992).

2 *Recommendations for the Grouping of Wards into District Electoral Areas for the purpose of Local Government Elections in Northern Ireland. Report by the District Electoral Areas Commissioner, Dr Maurice Hayes.* (Belfast HMSO, December 1992).

3 *House of Commons Second Report from the Home Affairs Committee, Session 1986-87 Redistribution of Seats* (HC97-I, 1986), p.24, paras 33 and 34.

4 The Commission's reasons for deciding to develop a geographic information system and a description of it are contained in *GIS and democracy: redrawing Northern Ireland's electoral boundaries* (GIS Europe, Vol.3, No. 10, December 1994).

5 *Parliamentary Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland. Review of Parliamentary Constituencies 1994.*

4 Provisional Recommendations

1. The Provisional Recommendations reproduced in detail in Appendix C to this Report recommended no change to the present number of constituencies but proposed significant alterations to boundaries. The Commission sought to limit the number and scale of boundary changes proposed and to preserve the integrity of local government districts (LGDs) and district electoral areas (DEAs) wherever practical. Nevertheless it was inevitable, given that there are 26 LGDs and the changes there have been in the distribution of the electorate since the last review and the shapes of many DEAs, that the Commission's proposals should divide a number of LGDs and DEAs between constituencies. However, the Commission's recommendations did not divide between constituencies any of the 582 wards in Northern Ireland. The proposals remedied serious imbalances by limiting the electorates of all constituencies to within 7% above or below the electoral quota.

2. In keeping with convention, all Northern Ireland Members of Parliament and the main Northern Ireland political parties were informed of the Commission's Provisional Recommendations before they were announced on 20 January 1994. They were also made available for inspection in the library of the House of Commons. A notice stating the effect of the proposed recommendations was published in the three main regional newspapers circulating in Northern Ireland, namely the Belfast Telegraph, the Irish News and News Letter newspapers. The notice also stated that a copy of the recommendations was open to inspection at specified places in each constituency in Northern Ireland and that representations with respect to the proposed recommendations should be made to the Commission within one month of the publication of the notice.

3. In their announcement of 20 January, which was widely distributed on behalf of the Commission by the Northern Ireland Office Information Services, the Commission pointed out that on the enumeration date all four Belfast borough constituencies were well below the electoral quota. The Commission had considered extending the boundaries of these four constituencies in an even, radial, fashion, but concluded that three constituencies could be accommodated within the Belfast LGD. The boundaries of these three new constituencies were drawn as far as practicable to respect DEAs. In only one instance did the Commission's Provisional Recommendations for Belfast divide a DEA, by placing the ward of Shaftesbury (in the Laganbank DEA) in the proposed Belfast West constituency.

4. The three proposed Belfast constituencies were as follows:

Belfast East comprising the DEAs of Pottinger, Victoria and Laganbank with the exception of the ward of Shaftesbury.

Belfast North comprising the DEAs of Castle, Court and Oldpark.

Belfast West comprising the DEAs of Balmoral, Lower Falls and Upper Falls and the ward of Shaftesbury in the Laganbank DEA.

5. The creation of three Belfast constituencies confined to Belfast LGD allowed the whole of Castlereagh LGD to be used in the formation of a new constituency. The Commission therefore proposed that a new constituency be created to include the whole of the Castlereagh LGD, the Ards LGD wards of Ballyrainey, Bradshaw's Brae, Central, Glen, Gregstown, Movilla and Whitespots and the North Down LGD wards of Cultra, Holywood Demesne, Holywood Priory and Loughview. It was proposed that the constituency should be named **Castlereagh and Newtownards**.

6. Since the new Castlereagh and Newtownards constituency incorporated seven Castlereagh LGD wards and four North Down LGD wards currently in the North Down parliamentary

constituency, the Commission proposed to compensate the constituency of **North Down** for the transfer of these wards by extending it to include the whole of the Ards Peninsula. Accordingly it was recommended that the new North Down constituency should comprise the whole of North Down LGD (except the wards of Cultra, Holywood Demesne, Holywood Priory and Loughview) and the Ards LGD wards of Ballywalter, Carrowdore, Donaghadee North, Donaghadee South, Kircubbin, Loughries, Millisle, Portaferry and Portavogie.

7. It was proposed that the boundaries of the constituency of **Lagan Valley** should coincide with those of Lisburn LGD. Under the Provisional Recommendations the remaining parts of the existing Lagan Valley constituency (namely the Castlereagh LGD wards of Carryduff East and Carryduff West and parts of the wards of Cairnshill and Knockbracken) would form part of the new constituency of Castlereagh and Newtownards.

8. The existing constituency of South Down is the largest constituency in Northern Ireland in terms of electorate. The Commission therefore considered it appropriate to make substantial alteration to the boundaries of that constituency. It was proposed that the new constituency should comprise the wards of Down LGD except Donard, Murlough, Shimna and Tollymore; the Ards LGD wards of Ballygowan, Comber East, Comber North, Comber West, Killinchy, Lisbane and Scrabo; and the Banbridge LGD wards of Ballyward, Bannside, Dromore North, Dromore South, Gransha, Katesbridge, Loughbrickland, Quilly and Rathfriland. It was proposed that the constituency should be named **Mid Down**. Under these proposals the constituency of Strangford would disappear.

9. One change was proposed to the present constituency of **Upper Bann**, namely that the Banbridge LGD ward of Loughbrickland, now part of that constituency, should become part of the proposed Mid Down constituency.

10. It was recommended that there should be a new constituency named **Newry and Mourne** comprising the whole of Newry and Mourne LGD together with the Down LGD wards of Donard, Murlough, Shimna and Tollymore.

11. The whole of Dungannon LGD is at present joined with Fermanagh LGD in the constituency of Fermanagh and South Tyrone. The Commission proposed to place Dungannon LGD (except for the westernmost Clogher Valley wards of Augher, Clogher and Fivemiletown) in a new constituency with the whole of Armagh LGD. It was proposed that this new constituency should be named **Blackwater**.

12. The Commission recommended that Omagh LGD except the wards of Drumnakilly, Gortin, Owenkillew and Termon should be joined with Fermanagh LGD and the Dungannon LGD wards of Augher, Clogher and Fivemiletown. It was proposed that the name of the existing constituency of **Fermanagh and South Tyrone** should be retained.

13. It was proposed that the boundaries of **Foyle** constituency should be the same as those of Derry LGD.

14. It was proposed that the constituency of **East Londonderry** should comprise Coleraine LGD, Limavady LGD and the Magherafelt LGD wards of Bellaghy, Gulladuff, Maghera, Swatragh, Upperlands and Valley.

15. It was proposed that a revised constituency of **Mid Ulster** should comprise Cookstown LGD, Strabane LGD, the Omagh LGD wards of Drumnakilly, Gortin, Owenkillew and Termon, and all the wards of Magherafelt LGD except those of Bellaghy, Gulladuff, Maghera, Swatragh, Upperlands and Valley.

16. No changes were proposed to the boundaries of the constituency of **North Antrim**. This constituency comprises Ballymena, Ballymoney and Moyle LGDs.

17. One change was proposed to the constituency of **East Antrim,** namely the transfer to it of the Newtownabbey LGD ward of Jordanstown and the remaining part of the ward of Monkstown both now in the existing constituency of South Antrim. It was proposed, in addition to the changes, to include in the constituency of **South Antrim** the whole of the Antrim LGD ward of Clady.

18. Expenses allowable to candidates at elections differ according to the designation of the constituency and the Commission recommended that the constituencies of Belfast East, Belfast North and Belfast West should be borough constituencies. All other constituencies included a significant rural element and it was proposed that these should be designated county constituencies.

19. The recommendations and maps illustrating the proposed changes were made available for inspection at district council and electoral offices and at public libraries on 27 January 1994. Notice to this effect, published that day, invited anyone or any organisation interested in the proposals to make representations to the Commission by 28 February 1994.[1] The Commission would like to place on record their gratitude to District Councils, the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland and Area Education and Library Boards for their co-operation in these arrangements.

1 Project Planning, an event management and communications company located in Ballynahinch, undertook the erection and distribution of display and other material. The Commission were grateful for the professional way in which they fulfilled their contract.

5 Local Inquiries

1. In response to their Provisional Recommendations, the Commission received some 300 submissions from members of the public, elected representatives, political parties, district councils and other interested bodies. These included representations from all the main political parties in Northern Ireland, eight local authorities and 27 bodies of electors (22 numbering 100 or more electors). Petitions calling for public Local Inquiries to be held were received with some 6,500 signatures of electors. Of these, one petition, the "Hands Off Holywood" petition contained some 2,000 signatures.

2. In the main, representations received by the Commission concerned:

(a) **the proposal to reduce the number of constituencies in Belfast from four to three by dividing the present Belfast South constituency between the proposed Belfast East and Belfast West constituencies.** Counter proposals either sought to draw the boundaries of the three proposed constituencies slightly differently or to retain four constituencies by extending these outwards beyond the Belfast City Council boundary. In particular, Belfast West constituency would include the Poleglass and Twinbrook areas of Lisburn Local Government District (LGD);

(b) **the proposal to divide Omagh LGD between the proposed Fermanagh and South Tyrone and Mid Ulster constituencies.** The Commission's proposal to join the towns of Enniskillen and Omagh in the same constituency was criticised for separating Omagh from its traditional links with other County Tyrone towns. Counter proposals sought to avoid dividing Omagh and other LGDs between proposed constituencies and to avoid the particular recommendation that the constituency of Mid Ulster should comprise five whole or part LGDs;

(c) **the proposal to create a Newry and Mourne constituency comprising the whole of Newry and Mourne LGD and part of Down LGD.** The effect of this recommendation was that the constituencies of Newry and Armagh and of South Down would cease to exist and be replaced by three new constituencies of Blackwater, Mid Down and Newry and Mourne. Counter proposals attacked the Provisional Recommendations as being unnecessary and unreasonable and sought to retain the constituencies of Newry and Armagh and South Down either in their present or in a modified form; and

(d) **the recommendation to remove the Holywood area of North Down LGD from the North Down constituency and include it in the proposed Castlereagh and Newtownards constituency.** Counter proposals emphasised the strong ties which existed between Holywood and the rest of North Down LGD, and the separateness of its identity from Dundonald and other parts of the proposed Castlereagh and Newtownards constituency. There was also criticism of the recommendation to exclude from the Castlereagh and Newtownards constituency those areas which were immediately adjacent to and had close ties with Newtownards, and their inclusion in the proposed Mid Down or North Down constituencies.

3. Having considered these representations, the Commission decided that, although not strictly required by statute to cause public Local Inquiries to be held in respect of the present Belfast North and North Antrim constituencies, Inquiries should nevertheless be held into the boundaries of all constituencies in Northern Ireland. The Commission decided that a single public Inquiry might not elicit relevant local information and opinion to the same extent as several Local Inquiries would and that five such Inquiries should be held by assistant Commissioners. It would then be for the Commission to form an overall view from the several reports of the assistant

Commissioners. In order that proper consideration might be given to the Commission's proposals and to counter proposals affecting neighbouring constituencies, it was decided that the Inquiries should look at particular groups of existing constituencies.

4. The Inquiries, conducted by assistant Commissioners selected from a panel appointed by the Secretary of State, were held in early May and in late June 1994 to avoid difficulties which might otherwise have been created for political parties leading up to the European Parliamentary elections held on 9 June 1994. The Inquiries were arranged as follows:

Mr John A. O'Hara, LL.B., Barrister at Law, held a Local Inquiry in respect of the recommendations affecting the borough constituencies of Belfast East, Belfast North, Belfast South and Belfast West in the City Hall, Belfast, on 4 and 5 May 1994.

Mr Gerald E. J. Simpson, LL.B., Barrister at Law, held a Local Inquiry in respect of the recommendations affecting the county constituencies of East Antrim, North Antrim and South Antrim in the Antrim Forum, Antrim, on 9 May 1994.

Mr Colin D. Gowdy, LL.B., Solicitor, held a Local Inquiry in respect of the recommendations affecting the county constituencies of Lagan Valley, North Down and Strangford in the Town Hall, Newtownards, on 13 June 1994.

Mr Aidan A. Canavan, B.A., Solicitor, held a Local Inquiry in respect of the recommendations affecting the county constituencies of East Londonderry, Fermanagh and South Tyrone, Foyle and Mid Ulster at the District Council Offices, Omagh, on 21 and 22 June 1994.

Mr Brian F. Fee, LL.B., Barrister at Law, held a Local Inquiry in respect of the recommendations affecting the county constituencies of Newry and Armagh, South Down and Upper Bann in the Town Hall, Newry, on 27 and 28 June 1994.

5. Copies of representations received by the Commission, a Statement of Reasons (reproduced at Appendix D to this Report) issued by the Commission explaining their recommendations (which was formally introduced at the Inquiries) and a leaflet outlining the purpose and procedure of the Inquiries was made available for public inspection at all district council and local electoral offices at the time the Inquiries were announced on 31 March 1994. All those who submitted representations to the Commission were informed of the time and place of Local Inquiries, and where the representations which the Commission had received were available for inspection. Following representations from one of the main political parties, the Commission decided to remove from the copies of representations available for public inspection the home addresses of members of the public and electoral information which might help identify those addresses. The Commission did so in the interests of the security and well being of those concerned. All those who submitted representations were sent the leaflet outlining the purpose and procedure of the Inquiries as well as the Commission's Statement of Reasons. All Northern Ireland Members of Parliament and the main Northern Ireland political parties were fully informed of the arrangements for Local Inquiries.

6. The Commission urged all those interested to attend the Local Inquiries and make known their views since it could not be assumed that the Inquiries would discuss only those matters raised in representations submitted to the Commission, or that the Commission's recommendations would remain unchanged. Attention was drawn to the fact that while the Commission would always invite written representations on any Revised Recommendations, further Local Inquiries were only rarely held during the course of a review of parliamentary constituencies.

7. The assistant Commissioners were provided with copies of the written representations received by the Commission. These included a number received after 28 February 1994, the last

Commissioners. In order that proper consideration might be given to the Commission's proposals and to counter proposals affecting neighbouring constituencies, it was decided that the Inquiries should look at particular groups of existing constituencies.

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7. The assistant Commissioners were provided with copies of the written representations received by the Commission. These included a number received after 28 February 1994, the last

day set by the Commission for the receipt of representations. The Commission decided to refer these representations to assistant Commissioners in the light of the House of Commons Second Report from the Home Affairs Committee in 1986 and their recommendation[1] that the statutory time allowed for objecting to a Boundary Commission's Provisional Recommendations should be extended from one to two months, a recommendation accepted by the Government.[2] Assistant Commissioners were also provided with the Commission's Provisional Recommendations and statistical and other information relevant to their task. All other information and help which assistant Commissioners subsequently sought, whether to enable them to conduct the Inquiries or to prepare their reports, was provided by the secretariat to the Commission.

8. At the conclusion of the Inquiries and in the light of public interest, the Commission issued a statement on 25 July 1994 making clear that it would be for the assistant Commissioners to prepare and submit reports of the Inquiries direct to the Commission. The reports would comment on written representations or oral submissions considered at the Inquiries as well as the Commission's Provisional Recommendations, and any counter proposals. Assistant Commissioners were advised that they might recommend that the Commission's proposals be accepted with or without alteration. Alternatively, assistant Commissioners might recommend that a counter proposal be adopted, with or without modification, as commanding greater local support than the Commission's proposals, but such a counter proposal would have to conform to the statutory rules governing the considerations to which the Commission must have regard.

9. It was explained in the statement issued on 25 July 1994 that no decision would be taken by the Commission to confirm their Provisional Recommendations or to publish Revised Recommendations until the reports of all five assistant Commissioners were available and had been carefully considered. If the Commission decided to publish Revised Recommendations, they would do so later in the year when copies of the assistant Commissioners' reports and a statement of the Commission's reasons for revising their earlier proposals would be made available for public inspection. It was also explained that if the Commission published Revised Recommendations, it would be open to anyone or any organisation to make representations to the Commission, whether objecting to or welcoming the Revised Recommendations, within one month of their publication. The Commission would give full consideration to any representations made at that stage. If objections were received, the Commission would not be obliged to hold a further Local Inquiry into the constituencies concerned, but they might do so at their discretion.

10. It is normal for verbatim records to be made of the proceedings of Local Inquiries and copies of these were subsequently sent to the main political parties in Northern Ireland. Copies were also available for inspection or purchase at the offices of the Commission.

11. The last of the reports of the assistant Commissioners who conducted the Local Inquiries was received by the Commission in October 1994. The decisions which faced the assistant Commissioners were formidable and the issues involved were sensitive. The Commission take this opportunity to record their thanks to each of the five assistant Commissioners for the careful and constructive way in which they conducted the Inquiries and their full and informative reports.

12. Four of the five reports submitted by the assistant Commissioners recommended that changes be made to the Commission's Provisional Recommendations. The Commission do not think it appropriate to detail here the conclusions and recommendations of the assistant Commissioners. Instead, the reports of the five assistant Commissioners are reproduced in Appendix E.

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1 *House of Commons Second Report from the Home Office Affairs Committee, Session 1986-87 Redistribution of Seats* (HC.97-I, 1986), para 30.

2 *The Government Reply to the Second Report from the Home Affairs Committee Session 1986-87 HC97-I, Redistribution of Seats,* (Cm.308, February 1988), para 2.2.

13. The assistant Commissioners had the benefit of relevant local information and opinion and the Commission were anxious to respect their views and their recommendations wherever practicable. The Commission were, however, faced with a complex task and therefore made it known that a decision on what changes, if any, were to be made to the Provisional Recommendations was unlikely to be reached quickly. As already mentioned, the Commission had informed the Secretary of State in 1992 that they could give no guarantee that they would be able to meet the time limit of 31 December 1994 set by the Boundary Commissions Act 1992 for the submission of their recommendations. Accordingly, the Commission advised the Secretary of State that they would not be in a position to report their Final Recommendations before 1995. A public statement was issued on 18 November 1994 explaining the reason for this delay.

6 Revised Recommendations

1. The representations received after publication of the Commission's Provisional Recommendations and the reports of the assistant Commissioners made it clear that some of the Provisional Recommendations were more radical than was acceptable to the electorates of the constituencies concerned. The Commission decided to re-examine their proposals and schemes previously considered and set aside. Revised Recommendations were published on 25 January 1995. These took account of representations received by the Commission and strongly reflected the conclusions and recommendations contained in the reports of the assistant Commissioners who had conducted the five public Local Inquiries.

2. The purpose of the Inquiries had been to ascertain relevant local information and opinion, to hear criticism of or support for the Commission's Provisional Recommendations, to receive any counter proposals, and to enable everyone attending the Inquiries who wished to comment, the opportunity to do so. It is customary for Boundary Commissions, where practicable, to accept recommendations expressed by assistant Commissioners. The Commission therefore placed importance on the reports of the assistant Commissioners and changes were made to their recommendations only to resolve conflicting recommendations or to give better effect to the statutory Rules for Redistribution of Seats.

Number of constituencies

3. The Rules provide that the number of constituencies in Northern Ireland shall not be greater than 18 or less than 16, and shall be 17 unless it appears to the Commission that Northern Ireland should for the time being be divided into 16 or (as the case may be) into 18 constituencies. As already mentioned,[1] at the outset of the Review the Commission had sought legal opinion on the number of constituencies they might recommend. The opinion of Senior Crown Counsel was that the Commission would be justified in recommending a number of constituencies other than 17 only to reduce or alleviate difficulties in applying the Rules for Redistribution of Seats on the basis of 17 constituencies.

4. In examining options for Revised Recommendations, the Commission sought to draw up proposals for 17 constituencies which would give effect to the substance of the reports and recommendations of the five assistant Commissioners. They found it impossible to do so without causing an excessive disparity between the electorates of constituencies and the electoral quota (EQ) or between the electorates of neighbouring constituencies. The Commission therefore considered that they were entitled, in accordance with the opinion of Senior Crown Counsel, to put forward Revised Recommendations on the basis of 18 constituencies, it not having been possible to devise an acceptable scheme for 16 constituencies.

Size of constituencies

5. At the outset of their Review the Commission set out to reduce constituency electorates to within 7% above or below the EQ (electoral average). In doing so, the Commission recognised that during the last periodical review, the established practice had been followed of regarding a tolerance of 10% above and below the quota figure as acceptable.[2] The Commission had also noticed the principle adopted by the Northern Ireland Local Government Boundaries Commissioner that electorates of wards should be within a 10% range within any Local Government District.[3] The Commission's Provisional Recommendations met the Commission's objective of creating constituencies with electorates of 7% above or below the EQ; but, on

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1 See Chapter 2, paragraph 4.

2 *Third Periodical Report on Parliamentary Constituencies* (Cmnd 8753, 1982) Chapter 1, para 1.6.

3 *Review of Local Government Boundaries, Report by the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner, Dr M. N. Hayes* (HMSO, June 1992), para 4.5.

further examination, it appeared to the Commission that this margin had been too restrictive and had perhaps contributed to the formation of those Provisional Recommendations which had been most criticised. Therefore, the Commission decided to work to a wider margin of tolerance and, in the event, recommended 18 constituencies within a range of about 11% above or below the average electorate, as calculated by reference to the number of parliamentary electors on 19 March 1993 (the enumeration date for the Review) and adjusted to allow for 18 constituencies. The Commission at that time also had the benefit of the draft 1995 Register of Electors.

6. The announcement of the Revised Recommendations for 18 constituencies summarised the main points and recommendations of the assistant Commissioners' reports and set out the reasons for the Commission's decisions.

Belfast East, Belfast North, Belfast South and Belfast West borough constituencies

7. The assistant Commissioner who held a Local Inquiry in Belfast recommended that the Commission revise their Provisional Recommendations and instead of creating three constituencies, should extend the existing four constituencies outwards in a radial fashion. The assistant Commissioner's recommendation stemmed from the conclusion that the present four constituencies and their respective, outlying areas had common ties which made the retention of four constituencies desirable in principle and possible in practice. In the assistant Commissioner's view, the boundary of Belfast City Council adopted by the Commission in their Provisional Recommendations to define the boundaries of three constituencies "does not really reflect any overriding reality in the community nor does it reflect the true boundaries of Belfast". In his view the identity of each of the existing four constituencies was sufficiently strong for these to be maintained if it were at all possible to do so.[1]

8. Under the Commission's Provisional Recommendations, constituency boundaries would have respected the Belfast Local Government District (LGD) boundary and, with one exception, the boundaries of the nine district electoral areas (DEAs) within Belfast LGD. Recognition of these boundaries would be lost under the assistant Commissioner's recommendations. The Commission accepted, however, that the reasons advanced by the assistant Commissioner for retaining the present four constituencies outweighed LGD and DEA boundary considerations.

9. The Commission accordingly recommended that full effect be given to all the recommendations of the Report of the Local Inquiry held in Belfast by extending the four constituencies precisely in the way proposed in the report. Boundaries between the four constituencies would also be adjusted precisely as recommended by the assistant Commissioner. This would alleviate difficulties caused by the large number of wards which are now partly in one constituency and partly in another following two successive reviews of local government boundaries since the Commission last reported.

10. Under the Revised Recommendations, the constituency of **Belfast East** would be extended to the east and to the south east of the city to include the five Castlereagh LGD wards of Gilnahirk, Hillfoot, Lower Braniel, Tullycarnet and Upper Braniel. The wards of Ballymacarrett, Orangefield, the Mount and Woodstock are at present partly in the constituency of Belfast East and partly in the constituency of Belfast South. It was proposed that the whole wards of Ballymacarrett, Orangefield and the Mount should in future form part of the Belfast East constituency and the whole ward of Woodstock should form part of the Belfast South constituency.

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1 See Report of the assistant Commissioner who held a Local Inquiry in Belfast at Annex A of Appendix E to this Report, para 24.

11. Under the Revised Recommendations, the constituency of **Belfast South** would be retained and extended to the south east of the city to include the six Castlereagh LGD wards of Beechill, Cairnshill, Galwally, Knockbracken, Minnowburn and Newtownbreda. The position of those wards which are at present partly in the constituency of Belfast East and partly in the constituency of Belfast South would be as already described. The ward of Shaftesbury is at present partly in the constituency of Belfast South and partly in the constituency of Belfast West. It was proposed that the whole of the ward should in future form part of the Belfast South constituency.

12. Under the Revised Recommendations, the constituency of **Belfast North** would be extended to the north of the city to include the five Newtownabbey LGD wards of Abbey, Coole, Dunanney, Valley and Whitehouse. The wards of Crumlin, Duncairn, New Lodge, Shankill and Woodvale are at present partly in the constituency of Belfast North and partly in the constituency of Belfast West. It was proposed that the whole wards of Crumlin, Duncairn, New Lodge and Woodvale should in future form part of the Belfast North constituency and that the whole of the Shankill ward should form part of the Belfast West constituency.

13. Under the Revised Recommendations, the constituency of **Belfast West** would be extended to the south west of the city to include the four Lisburn LGD wards of Collin Glen, Kilwee, Poleglass and Twinbrook. The position of those wards which are at present partly in the constituency of Belfast West and partly in the constituencies of Belfast North or Belfast South would be as already described.

Newry and Armagh, South Down and Upper Bann county constituencies

14. The Commission's Provisional Recommendations proposed that substantial changes be made to the constituencies of South Down and of Newry and Armagh and that one change be made to the constituency of Upper Bann. Three new constituencies would have been created. The proposed constituency of Blackwater was to comprise the whole of Armagh LGD and the whole of Dungannon LGD (except the wards of Augher, Clogher and Fivemiletown). The proposed constituency of Mid Down was to comprise Down LGD (except the wards of Donard, Murlough, Shimna and Tollymore - "the Newcastle wards"), all those wards of Banbridge LGD now included in the constituency of South Down with the addition of the Banbridge LGD ward of Loughbrickland now in the constituency of Upper Bann, and the seven Ards LGD wards of Ballygowan, Comber East, Comber North, Comber West, Killinchy, Lisbane and Scrabo - "the Ards wards" - now in the constituency of Strangford. The proposed Newry and Mourne constituency was to comprise the Newry and Mourne LGD and the Newcastle wards.

15. The Commission's proposals attracted a large number of representations. The assistant Commissioner who held a Local Inquiry in Newry recommended[1] that the present constituencies be retained subject to certain changes which would have the effect of reducing the size of the electorate of the constituency of South Down. The assistant Commissioner considered that the inclusion of the Ards wards in the proposed Mid Down constituency would unnecessarily divide Ards LGD and cause significant inconvenience to the electorate of those wards by breaking strong ties they have with Newtownards. The assistant Commissioner also considered that the proposed transfer of the Banbridge LGD ward of Loughbrickland from the Upper Bann to the proposed Mid Down constituency was mistaken as the ward looks towards Banbridge town in the Upper Bann constituency. The assistant Commissioner also considered that it was inappropriate to cut off the Newcastle wards from the remainder of Down LGD when strong links existed between these wards and the Downpatrick area. Furthermore, strategic arrangements for conserving the Mournes Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty would be

1 See Report of the assistant Commissioner who held a Local Inquiry in Newry at Annex E of Appendix E to this Report.

adversely affected if the Newcastle wards were to be placed in a different constituency to the Downpatrick area. The assistant Commissioner considered that the existing three constituencies could be retained with electorates close to the average without radical changes of the kind proposed in the Commission's Provisional Recommendations, and that such constituencies would have greater respect for geographical, historical and other links than those recommended by the Commission.

16. The assistant Commissioner recommended that the Ards wards should form part of the Castlereagh and Newtownards constituency proposed by the Commission in their Provisional Recommendations; that the Banbridge LGD ward of Loughbrickland should remain part of the constituency of Upper Bann and the Banbridge LGD ward of Bannside should be transferred to that constituency; that the Banbridge LGD wards of Dromore North, Dromore South, Gransha and Quilly should form part of the Lagan Valley constituency; and that adjustments should be made to the boundary between the Newry and Armagh and South Down constituencies thereby avoiding the Newry and Mourne LGD wards of Derryleckagh and Donaghmore being partly in one constituency and partly in another. The assistant Commissioner made no recommendation in regard to that part of Dungannon LGD which under the Provisional Recommendations would form part of the proposed Blackwater constituency.

17. The Commission accepted the assistant Commissioner's principal recommendation that the three constituencies of Newry and Armagh, South Down, and Upper Bann should be retained. However, the Commission were unable to recommend that these constituencies be retained either in their present form or in precisely that recommended in the report of the Local Inquiry. The Commission proposed that certain adjustments be made to the recommendations of the assistant Commissioner, namely that the Newry and Mourne LGD ward of Donaghmore and the Banbridge LGD ward of Bannside should continue to form part of the constituency of South Down. The effect of this proposal was to leave the boundaries of the constituencies of Newry and Armagh and of Upper Bann virtually unaltered. The Commission also proposed that in order to reduce the size of the South Down electorate, the Down LGD wards of Derryboy, Killyleagh and Saintfield should form part of the revised constituency of Strangford, which is referred to later.

18. Hence it was proposed that the constituencies of **Newry and Armagh** and of **Upper Bann** should (with minor changes made to avoid splitting wards) be unaltered. The constituency of **South Down** would comprise the whole of Down LGD (except the wards of Derryboy, Killyleagh and Saintfield), all the Banbridge LGD wards now in that constituency (except the wards of Dromore North, Dromore South, Gransha and Quilly) and all the Newry and Mourne LGD wards now in that constituency.

Lagan Valley, North Down and Strangford county constituencies

19. The Commission's Provisional Recommendations had proposed the creation of a new constituency of Castlereagh and Newtownards which was to constitute the whole of Castlereagh LGD, part of Ards LGD including Newtownards, and parts of North Down LGD including Holywood. The rest of North Down LGD and the Ards Peninsula were to form the constituency of North Down. Other parts of Ards LGD were to form part of the proposed constituency of Mid Down. It was proposed that the boundaries of the constituency of Lagan Valley would follow those of Lisburn LGD.

20. The assistant Commissioner who held a Local Inquiry in Newtownards[1] considered that the North Down LGD wards of Cultra, Holywood Demesne, Holywood Priory and Loughview - "the Holywood wards" - had close ties with the rest of North Down LGD and that it was inappropriate for the wards to form part of the proposed Castlereagh and Newtownards constituency. He also

1 See Report of the assistant Commissioner who held a Local Inquiry in Newtownards at Annex C of Appendix E to this Report.

identified close ties between the Ards LGD wards of Loughries and Scrabo and the town of Newtownards. The assistant Commissioner accordingly recommended that North Down LGD should not be divided between constituencies, and that the two Ards LGD wards of Loughries and Scrabo should remain in the same constituency as Newtownards. The Commission accepted these recommendations.

21. Although not a matter of recommendation, the assistant Commissioner drew attention in his report to the extended shape of the proposed North Down constituency which would be caused by his recommended transfer of the Holywood wards. It also appeared to the assistant Commissioner that those living in the Ards Peninsula (with the exception of the Donaghadee and perhaps Millisle wards) look to Newtownards rather than to Bangor. Furthermore, the assistant Commissioner pointed to ties which exist between Comber, Killinchy, Dundonald and Newtownards, a finding consistent with that in the Report of the Local Inquiry held in Newry.

22. Under the Revised Recommendations, it was therefore proposed that those parts of Castlereagh LGD not to be included in the Belfast borough constituencies, together with the whole of Ards LGD (except the wards of Donaghadee North, Donaghadee South and Millisle) should be part of the same constituency. In addition, as already mentioned, it was proposed to add to the constituency the Down LGD wards of Derryboy, Killyleagh and Saintfield. Since this constituency closely resembled the existing constituency of **Strangford**, the Commission proposed that this name be retained in preference to the name of Castlereagh and Ards recommended in the report of the Local Inquiry.

23. Under the Revised Recommendations, the constituency of **North Down** would comprise, as recommended in the Report of the Local Inquiry, the whole of North Down LGD, together with the Ards LGD wards of Donaghadee North, Donaghadee South and Millisle which the assistant Commissioner considered look to Bangor rather than to Newtownards.

24. Under the Revised Recommendations, the constituency of **Lagan Valley** would include the whole of Lisburn LGD but not the wards of Collin Glen, Kilwee, Poleglass and Twinbrook which would, as recommended in the Report of the Local Inquiry held in Belfast, form part of the constituency of Belfast West. The Lagan Valley constituency would also include the Banbridge LGD wards of Dromore North, Dromore South, Gransha and Quilly which the assistant Commissioner who held a Local Inquiry in Newry recommended should form part of the Lagan Valley constituency.

East Antrim, North Antrim and South Antrim county constituencies

25. The Commission's Provisional Recommendations proposed no change be made to the constituencies of **East Antrim, North Antrim** and **South Antrim** save that the Antrim LGD ward of Jordanstown (and that part ward of Monkstown) now in the constituency of South Antrim would be transferred to the constituency of East Antrim. In addition those parts of the Antrim LGD ward of Clady now in the constituencies of Belfast North and Belfast West would be transferred to the constituency of South Antrim.

26. The assistant Commissioner who held a Local Inquiry in Antrim[1] recommended no change be made to the Commission's Provisional recommendations for the constituencies. The Commission accepted this recommendation but with one alteration. The report of the Local Inquiry held in Belfast recommended that the Newtownabbey LGD wards of Abbey, Coole, Dunanney, Valley and Whitehouse now in the constituency of East Antrim should form part of the proposed constituency of Belfast North. The Commission accepted this recommendation for the reasons already set out.

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1 See Report of the assistant Commissioner who held a Local Inquiry in Antrim at Annex B of Appendix E to this Report.

East Londonderry, Fermanagh and South Tyrone, Foyle and Mid Ulster county constituencies

27. The Commission's Provisional Recommendations proposed that the whole of Fermanagh LGD and the whole of Omagh LGD (except the wards of Drumnakilly, Gortin, Owenkillew and Termon) and the Dungannon LGD wards of Augher, Clogher and Fivemiletown would form the constituency of Fermanagh and South Tyrone. The whole of Dungannon LGD (except the wards of Augher, Clogher and Fivemiletown) and the whole of Armagh LGD were to form the new Blackwater constituency. The four Omagh LGD wards already mentioned, together with the whole of Strabane LGD and the whole of Magherafelt LGD (except the wards of Bellaghy, Gulladuff, Maghera, Swatragh, Upperlands and Valley) were to form the constituency of Mid Ulster. The whole of Coleraine LGD, the whole of Limavady LGD and the six Magherafelt LGD wards already mentioned were to form the constituency of East Londonderry. The boundaries of Foyle constituency were to follow those of Derry LGD.

28. The assistant Commissioner who held a Local Inquiry in Omagh[1] recommended that Omagh town should not be included in the proposed Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency. The Local Inquiry established that Omagh town had closer links with other County Tyrone towns than with Enniskillen or other parts of Fermanagh, and that there was a substantial body of opinion that Omagh LGD should not be divided by constituency boundaries. The assistant Commissioner also recommended that Strabane LGD should be divided between the three constituencies of Fermanagh and South Tyrone, Foyle and Mid Ulster. The Strabane LGD wards of Castlederg, Clare, Glenderg and Newtownstewart would be transferred to the proposed Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency; the wards of Artigarvan, Dunnamanagh and Slievekirk would remain in Foyle constituency; and Strabane town and all remaining wards would form part of the Mid Ulster constituency. He also recommended that the Magherafelt LGD ward of Lower Glenshane should not form part of the proposed Mid Ulster constituency, but should remain in the East Londonderry constituency.

29. In considering these recommendations, the Commission had to have regard to the recommendation in the report of the Local Inquiry held in Newry that the constituency of Newry and Armagh should be retained. In accepting this recommendation, the Commission could no longer proceed with their earlier proposal to create a new constituency of Blackwater which would have comprised the whole of Armagh LGD and the larger part of Dungannon LGD.

30. Underlying the recommendations of the assistant Commissioner who held the Local Inquiry in Omagh was the substantial body of opinion that Omagh LGD should not be divided by constituency boundaries. The Commission considered that this body of opinion should be recognised and proposed that the whole of Omagh LGD and the whole of Strabane LGD should form a new constituency to be called **West Tyrone**.

31. It was proposed that the whole of Cookstown LGD, the whole of Magherafelt LGD and the DEA of Torrent in Dungannon LGD should form the constituency of **Mid Ulster**.

32. The Commission proposed that the rest of Dungannon LGD (namely the whole DEAs of Blackwater, Clogher Valley and Dungannon Town) and the whole of Fermanagh LGD should form a constituency which would retain the name of **Fermanagh and South Tyrone**.

33. It was proposed that the whole of Coleraine LGD and the whole of Limavady LGD should form the constituency of **East Londonderry**.

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1 See Report of the assistant Commissioner who held a Local Inquiry in Omagh at Annex D of Appendix E to this Report.

34. As set out in the Provisional Recommendations, it was proposed that the whole of Derry LGD should form the constituency of **Foyle**.

35. The proposed constituencies, their electorates on the 19 March 1993 enumeration date and percentage deviation from the electoral average calculated on the basis of 18 constituencies was as follows:

Constituency	Electorate 19 March 1993	% Deviation from Electoral Average (64,082)
Belfast East	63,881	- 0.3
Belfast North	67,989	+ 6.1
Belfast South	64,491	- 0.6
Belfast West	62,940	- 1.8
East Antrim	56,732	- 11.5
East Londonderry	57,023	- 11.0
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	63,090	- 1.5
Foyle	64,199	+ 0.2
Lagan Valley	67,551	+ 5.4
Mid Ulster	56,935	- 11.2
Newry and Armagh	68,656	+ 7.1
North Antrim	71,215	+ 11.1
North Down	61,745	- 3.6
South Antrim	67,045	+ 4.6
South Down	67,516	+ 5.4
Strangford	66,420	+ 3.6
Upper Bann	69,079	+ 7.8
West Tyrone	56,970	- 11.1
TOTAL	1,153,477	

36. The Revised Recommendations and associated maps together with copies of the Reports of the Local Inquiries and general information booklets were made available for public inspection at all District Council and Electoral Offices, and at most public libraries as well as at the offices of the Commission. In addition, and as with the Provisional Recommendations, copies of the Revised Recommendations were sent to all Northern Ireland Members of Parliament, the main political parties, all local authorities and to a range of interested bodies. The Revised Recommendations were also made available for inspection in the library of the House of Commons. All those who had attended the Local Inquiries and had asked to be sent copies of the relevant assistant Commissioners' reports were sent these reports together with a copy of the Revised Recommendations. Notice of the Revised Recommendations was published in the Belfast Telegraph, the Irish News and News Letter newspapers on 25 January 1995 and appeared in the Belfast Gazette. Anyone or any organisation interested in the proposals was invited to make representations to the Commission by 27 February 1995.

7 Final Recommendations

1. Thirty representations were received on the Revised Recommendations from the main political parties in Northern Ireland, elected representatives, district councils, interested bodies and members of the public. No petitions were received. Four of the representations received from local authorities expressed support for the Revised Recommendations. The names of those individuals and organisations which submitted representations are contained in Appendix F to this Report.

2. Some representations concerned issues covered in submissions made to the Commission at the time their Provisional Recommendations were published and were about issues already raised at Local Inquiries. In the case of other representations, there was little or no evidence to show how widely supported might be the views they expressed. Some representations concerned the decision to increase the number of constituencies, that undue weight had been attached by assistant Commissioners to certain evidence heard at Local Inquiries, and that there was a public perception of political bias. Several submissions called for further Local Inquiries. Some representations, in particular that by the Alliance Party for Northern Ireland, believed that the present arrangements for determining local authority and Parliamentary constituency boundaries are seriously flawed. They identified the causes of their concern and the improvements which might be made. However these and other criticisms affecting proportionality and the method of voting employed at parliamentary elections in Northern Ireland are not within the remit of the Commission.

Names and designation of constituencies

3. Criticism was made of the proposal to retain the constituency name of Strangford when it did not include the Down Local Government District (LGD) ward of that name or the village of Strangford. This was not, however, a situation which had been brought about by any boundary changes proposed by the Commission. Other representations suggested that the proposed constituency of West Tyrone should be named North West or North and West Tyrone or West Ulster. However, Omagh District Council especially welcomed the proposed constituency name of West Tyrone and other representations referred to the constituency by that name in a way which suggested its acceptance. There therefore seemed insufficient reason for the Commission to modify the names of the proposed constituencies. No representations were received which concerned the designation of proposed constituencies.

Boundaries of Greater Belfast constituencies

4. The Ulster Democratic Unionist Party North Belfast Association proposed that the Belfast LGD wards of Glencairn, Highview and Shankill should be included in the proposed Belfast North, not Belfast West constituency. In effect, the Association proposed that the whole of the Court District Electoral Area (DEA) be included in the Belfast North constituency. The Commission noted that the proposal to include these three wards in Belfast North constituency (and in effect adopt the West Belfast peaceline as the constituency boundary) had been criticised during the Local Inquiry held in Belfast, and that to include these three wards in the proposed Belfast North constituency would increase that constituency to about 18% above the electoral average calculated by reference to the 1995 Register of Parliamentary Electors[1]. No other representations received by the Commission supported this proposal. The assistant Commissioner who conducted the Local Inquiry in Belfast had recommended that these three wards remain part of the present (and proposed) constituency of Belfast West and the Commission concluded that there was insufficient reason to depart from this recommendation.

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1 The 1995 Register of Electors was published on 15 February 1995. The Register showed that on 16 February 1995 there were 1,169,423 eligible parliamentary electors in Northern Ireland. The electoral average based on 18 constituencies was therefore 64,968. These figures have been used as the basis for calculations throughout this chapter.

5. The Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) and the Conservative Party Political Centre proposed respectively that the Lisburn LGD ward of Dunmurry or the whole of the Dunmurry Cross DEA[1] should be included in the proposed Belfast West constituency. In their representations it was felt that these areas shared common characteristics and that their inclusion in the proposed Belfast West constituency would help equalise the size of electorates of that constituency and the adjacent constituency of Lagan Valley. However, other representations including those from the Ulster Unionist Council (UUC) and another on behalf of Dunmurry local residents proposed that the wards of Dunmurry and Seymour Hill should form part of the proposed Belfast South constituency. In addition, representations received from Lisburn District Council opposed the four Lisburn LGD wards of Colin Glen, Kilwee, Poleglass and Twinbrook being included in the Belfast West constituency and the view was taken that the Council would equally object to any changes affecting the Derryaghy, Dunmurry and Seymour Hill wards. No unanimous view of local ties in these areas was therefore presented. The Commission accordingly decided to adhere to their Revised Recommendations, especially in the light of the report of the Local Inquiry held in Belfast in which the assistant Commissioner said that it was patently obvious that many of the people who live in the Twinbrook and Poleglass areas have strong ties with West Belfast.[2]

6. The Commission also received representations from Newtownabbey District Council objecting to the proposed division of Newtownabbey LGD between three constituencies by including in the Belfast North constituency the wards of Abbey, Coole, Dunanney, Valley and Whitehouse. The Council were concerned that residents in the five wards would perceive that they were North Belfast rather than Newtownabbey residents. The Council also felt that on grounds of electoral size their LGD should constitute a single constituency which would serve to enhance the Council's identity. No other representations were received, save those received from the Alliance Party which are referred to below. The Commission noted that specific objections to extending the Belfast North constituency in the way now proposed had not been raised at the Local Inquiry held in Belfast. Moreover, the creation of a constituency with boundaries corresponding to those of Newtownabbey LGD would have considerable repercussions for the proposed East Antrim, North Antrim and South Antrim constituency boundaries which had been left substantially unaffected by the present Review.

7. In representations, the Alliance Party drew attention to anomalies that, in their opinion, would arise by the inclusion of Abbey ward in the proposed Belfast North constituency, and that the constituency boundary proposed by the Commission would be drawn between houses in several streets. Instead, the Alliance Party proposed that the ward be divided between the proposed Belfast North and East Antrim constituencies along Station Road. The Rules for Redistribution of Seats provide that so far as is practicable no ward should be included partly in one constituency and partly in another but that the Commission may take account so far as they reasonably can of any local ties which would be broken by alterations in constituency boundaries. After careful consideration, the Commission concluded that dividing the ward between constituencies could confuse the electorate and create undue difficulties in the organisation of elections and should not be accepted.

8. The Commission also received representations from the Alliance Party in relation to similar issues affecting the Gilnahirk and Hillfoot areas of East Belfast but for the same reasons decided not to divide wards between constituencies. The Commission also received representations from the SDLP proposing that the two Castlereagh LGD wards of Carryduff East and Carryduff West should be included in the proposed Belfast South constituency. The Commission felt, however, that Carryduff is a distinct and separate entity and not part of Belfast. In the absence then of

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1 The Dunmurry Cross DEA comprises the Lisburn LGD wards of Derryaghy, Dunmurry and Seymour Hill as well as the four wards of Colin Glen, Kilwee, Poleglass and Twinbrook which the Commission recommended in their Revised Recommendations should form part of the Belfast West constituency.

2 See Annex A of Appendix E to this Report, para. 30B.

evidence to confirm the support there might be for this change to their Revised Recommendations, the Commission concluded that there was insufficient justification to include these two wards in an otherwise overwhelmingly urban constituency.

Boundaries outside Greater Belfast

9. Representations by the UUC put forward counter proposals which would reconstruct constituencies in the south east of the Province. In the main, the UUC sought to retain the Newry and Mourne constituency proposed by the Commission in their Provisional Recommendations. The whole of Armagh LGD would be joined with part of Craigavon LGD; the whole of Banbridge LGD would be joined with parts of Craigavon and Lisburn LGDs; and Down LGD would be joined with those parts of Lisburn LGD not included in other proposed constituencies. The Commission noted that this major reconstruction divided between constituencies no more LGDs than did their Revised Recommendations. However, no particular arguments were put forward in favour of these counter proposals which it was felt would justify overturning the recommendations of the assistant Commissioner who had conducted a Local Inquiry in Newry, and which had formed the basis for the Commission's Revised Recommendations. The Commission therefore decided not to adopt these counter proposals.

10. The Commission did not accept representations received from Banbridge District Council which objected to the decision to remove from the South Down constituency the four Banbridge LGD wards of Dromore North, Dromore South, Gransha and Quilly, and their inclusion in the proposed Lagan Valley constituency. The Local Inquiry held in Newry had before it proposals to exclude the four wards from the South Down constituency and the assistant Commissioner who conducted the Inquiry had accepted these proposals. There had therefore been no lack of opportunity for public examination of the proposal and the Commission felt that they had given very careful consideration to the Report of the assistant Commissioner before confirming this recommendation.

11. The Ulster Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and Sinn Fein saw no case for including the Torrent DEA (in Dungannon LGD) in the proposed constituency of Mid Ulster. The DUP was critical of the approach adopted by the Commission and believed that the area had little in common with the rest of the proposed constituency. They felt that the area had a much greater association with the Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency and with Dungannon LGD.

12. The SDLP offered the counter proposal that the Dungannon LGD wards of Killyman and Moy as well as the Torrent DEA should be included in the proposed Mid Ulster constituency. The SDLP felt that to do so would improve the shape of the proposed Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency and equalise the size of electorates of the proposed constituency and that of Mid Ulster.

13. There was therefore no unanimous view about the constituency in which these areas should be placed. Furthermore, the Commission noted that it would not be practicable for Torrent DEA to remain part of the Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency when the effect of this would be to reduce the proposed constituency of Mid Ulster to 25% below the electoral average. The Commission therefore decided not to modify their recommendations in respect of these areas.

14. The DUP also proposed that the Glenelly DEA and the ward of Sion Mills (both in Strabane LGD) should be added to the proposed Mid Ulster constituency. However, a similar proposal put forward at the Local Inquiry held in Omagh had been rejected by the assistant Commissioner conducting the Inquiry as it would produce unnatural constituencies which some might regard as contrived. The Commission concluded that the DUP's latest proposals had already been fully considered at the Inquiry and that there was no justification for the Commission to alter their Revised Recommendations in this respect.

15. Representations were also received from Ballymena District Council. The Council felt that electors in the proposed North Antrim constituency would be under represented by comparison with other constituencies as a result of the proposed constituency having the largest electorate. The District Council offered no alternative scheme.

16. The assistant Commissioner who held a Local Inquiry in Antrim had considered this point but made no recommendation to reduce the size of the constituency. The Alliance Party, on the other hand, suggested in representations on the Revised Recommendations that the Moyle LGD wards of Glenaan, Glenariff and Glendun should be taken out of the proposed North Antrim constituency and be included in that of East Antrim, thereby helping equalise the electorates of these two constituencies to 7% above and 7% below the average electorate respectively. Although the Coast Road links these wards to the present East Antrim constituency, that constituency would as a result become a much elongated one. A similar proposal made by the Conservative Party Northern Ireland Area Council had been considered by the assistant Commissioner who conducted the Local Inquiry in Antrim. However, although fully taken into account by the assistant Commissioner, the proposal had not been accepted by him. No other political parties or local authorities had put forward a similar proposal, and it was not one which the Commission felt they could accept.

Number of constituencies

17. The South Down Unionist Association, Ulster Unionist Council, Sinn Fein and Alliance Party expressed in representations to the Commission that their earlier representations on the Provisional Recommendations and their arguments at Local Inquiries had been on the premise that there would be 17 constituencies in Northern Ireland, whereas the Commission's Revised Recommendations proposed 18 constituencies. The Commission took into consideration the concern of these parties and also recognised that since the Revised Recommendations were so different from the Provisional Recommendations, Local Inquiries might not have had full opportunity to consider all aspects of the changes proposed in the Revised Recommendations. The Commission concluded, however, that from the nature and extent of these further representations, none of which objected to an increase in the number of constituencies to 18, little would be achieved by a further Local Inquiry or Inquiries being held. Only the UUC had put forward an alternative scheme but that scheme was confined to one part of the Province and, in the opinion of the Commission, did not offer a viable alternative to the Revised Recommendations.

Size of constituencies

18. In representations, a number of political parties criticised the Commission's Revised Recommendations for proposing constituencies with unacceptable variations in the size of their electorates. The Revised Recommendations proposed constituencies whose electorates varied by up to about 11% above or below the average. Sinn Fein considered possible a scheme of 18 constituencies whose electorates varied by only 5% above or below the average. The SDLP felt that the Revised Recommendations did not meet the requirement of avoiding excessive disparities between the electorates of neighbouring constituencies. They drew particular attention to the variation in size of electorates of the proposed Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency and the neighbouring Mid Ulster constituency and the proposed Belfast West constituency and the neighbouring Lagan Valley constituency. And, as already mentioned, the Alliance Party put forward counter proposals which would reduce the disparity in size of electorates of the proposed East Antrim and North Antrim constituencies. The UUC also regarded the disparities as a considerable deterioration from the Commission's earlier Provisional Recommendations which had proposed constituencies in a range of 7% above or below the electoral quota.

19. The Commission gave renewed consideration to this aspect of their proposals. They had available to them the published 1995 Register of Electors and changes which had occurred in the relative size of electorates of the constituencies proposed. They noted that those proposed constituencies with electorates which were more than 10% above or below the average size had electorates which were either static (North Antrim) or moving closer to the average (East Antrim, East Londonderry, Mid Ulster and West Tyrone). Accordingly, the Commission did not consider the variations in the size of electorates excessive or that these eroded the principle of electoral equality.

Other considerations

20. Finally, the UUC in their representations expressed their belief that the assistant Commissioner who conducted the Local Inquiry in Newry had accorded undue weight to the views of the Down and the Newry and Mourne District Councils when these views were essentially those of the SDLP, that party being in a position of majority on the two district councils. No substantive representations were received by the Commission or were considered at the Local Inquiry from the Armagh, Banbridge or Craigavon District Councils. Also, it was clear from the transcript of the Local Inquiry held in Newry that the assistant Commissioner either sought or had drawn to his attention the relative strengths of the political parties on the Down and on the Newry and Mourne District Councils. The assistant Commissioner was therefore in a position to take into account any possible bias in the evidence of those District Councils when arriving at his recommendations. The Commission were satisfied that this point was not one of substance.

21. Assertions made variously by the UUC, DUP and Alliance Party referred or alluded to a perception that political influence by or on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Ireland had been brought to bear on the Commission in such a way as to favour the SDLP. The Commission take the opportunity provided by this report to give the assurance that no representations were received from or influence brought to bear by or on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Ireland at any point during the course of the present Review. Neither did the Commission meet or make contact with their representatives.[1]

Conclusions

22. For the reasons already set out, the Commission concluded that it would be inappropriate for them to publish any modifications to their Revised Recommendations. The Commission were not persuaded that any of the counter proposals they received were widely representative of local opinion, and many could not be acted upon without there being unacceptable alterations to adjacent constituency boundaries. Neither did the Commission consider that any useful purpose would be achieved by conducting a further Local Inquiry or Inquiries. Very full opportunity for public expression had already been afforded by five Local Inquiries covering all Northern Ireland constituencies. In relation to the particular concern that the Commission's Revised Recommendations differed significantly from the Provisional Recommendations and proposed that the number of constituencies in Northern Ireland be increased to 18, the Commission gave serious thought to alternative schemes for 16, 17 and 18 constituencies before publishing their Revised Recommendations. Furthermore, none of the representations they received persuaded the Commission that there might be another, preferable scheme for 18 constituencies which would give better effect to the Statutory Rules for the Redistribution of Seats.

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1 The Commission are aware of the replies made by the Secretary of State and the Minister of State (Mr Ancram) to questions in the House of Commons. HC. Debs. Vol.250, Col.1326, 1 December 1994; Vol.254, Cols.167 and 168, 7 February 1995; Vol.254, Col.680, 15 February 1995; Vol. 255, Cols.402 and 403, 27 February 1995.

23. The Commission therefore announced on 24 March 1995 that, having carefully considered representations made to them following publication of the Revised Recommendations, it had been decided to propose no change to those recommendations and that a further Local Inquiry or Inquiries would not be held. All those who had submitted representations were informed of the decision.

24. The Final Recommendations of the Commission are that there should be 18 parliamentary constituencies in Northern Ireland as set out and defined by reference to the local authority wards listed in Appendix G to this Report.

25. The recommended constituencies and their electorates are set out for comparative purposes in Appendix H. Columns A of the Appendix give the electorate for each constituency and the percentage by which it deviates from the Electoral Quota (electoral average) of 67,852 as determined on 19 March 1993 (the enumeration date for the purposes of the Review) on the basis of there being 17 constituencies in Northern Ireland. Column B gives the percentage deviations from the average number of electors (64,082) on 19 March 1993 on the basis of 18 constituencies. Columns C give the electorate of each constituency and their percentage variation from the electoral average on the basis of information published in the Register of Electors for 1995 and there being 18 constituencies. The Commission consider that Columns C provide the most realistic guide to present constituency electorates and, by comparison with Column B, trends in their relative size.

26. Maps illustrating the constituencies are reproduced in Appendix J.

8 Other Recommendations

1. In the course of the Review, the Commission encountered matters and received representations relating to the legislation under which they are required to conduct their Reviews. It is felt appropriate to draw attention in this Report to certain of these issues.

Composition of the Commission

2. Schedule 1 to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 provides that officers of the Commission shall include, as assessors, the Registrar General of Births and Deaths in Northern Ireland, the Commissioner of Valuation for Northern Ireland and the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern lreland. Although the Director General of Ordnance Survey is included as an assessor to the Commissions for England, for Scotland and for Wales no equivalent provision is made in relation to the Commission for Northern lreland.

3. The Commission have relied heavily upon the professional advice and help of the Director of Ordnance Survey during the current Review and, by invitation, the Director has attended meetings of the Commission. Ordnance Survey have provided invaluable assistance and are well informed on matters relevant to the work of the Commission. The Director of Ordnance Survey is an assessor to the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner[1] and has an equally valuable role to play in advising the Commission on matters affecting Ordnance Survey's responsibilities. The Commission therefore invite consideration to be given to introducing legislation so that the Director of Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland as well as the Commissioner for Valuation shall serve as assessors. The Commissioner, by virtue of his responsibilities, has shown that he is well placed to continue to make a valuable contribution to the work of the Commission.

Sequence of Reviews

4. Section 50 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972, as amended, provides that the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner (LGBC) should be appointed to review local government boundaries every 10 to 15 years from the date of submission of the final report of the last review. The District Electoral Areas Commissioner (Northern Ireland) Order 1984 provides for the grouping of local government wards into district electoral areas following completion of the local government review. The 10 to 15 year period was intended to complement the identical cycle for Boundary Commission reviews as provided by section 3 of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986. However, the Boundary Commissions Act 1992 has altered the period for parliamentary constituency reviews and these now take place every eight to 12 years from the date of submission of the last report. The 1992 Act has thus disturbed the cycle of reviews with the consequence that their synchronisation will be lost unless legislation to remedy this is introduced.

5. The House of Commons Home Affairs Committee recognised the importance of this synchronisation[2] and, as already mentioned in this Report[3], the Commission were grateful that the last review of local government boundaries had been brought forward to facilitate the present Review. The review by the LGBC provides the Commission with the 'building blocks' for constituencies and it is therefore important that such review be concluded before that undertaken by the Commission. As matters stand, the LGBC will commence the next review of local government boundaries in any of the years 2002 to 2007. This review will need to be followed by that of the District Electoral Areas Commissioner (DEAC). The Boundary Commissions Act

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1 Schedule 4 to the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1992 provided for the Chief Survey Officer of Ordnance Survey for Northern Ireland to be an assessor to the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner.

2 *House of Commons Second Report from the Home Affairs Committee, Session 1986-87 Redistribution of Seats,* (HC97-l, December 1986), para. 33.

3 Chapter l, para. 4 refers.

1992 provides that the Commission will need to submit a Report of their Fifth Periodical Review on parliamentary constituencies by no later than the year 2007. Since the Commission have regard not only to wards but also to district electoral areas in formulating their recommendations, they may not be able to complete their next review within the statutory time limits laid down by the 1992 Act if they await completion of the reviews by the LGBC and DEAC.

6. The Commission are anxious to avoid the situation which arose after the completion of their Third Periodical Review in 1982 when local government boundaries were subsequently revised resulting in altered wards being divided between constituencies. The Commission therefore recommend that consideration be given to amendment of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 to enable the next review of local government boundaries to be brought forward.

Composition of Constituencies

7. The proposal was put forward in Parliament during the passage of the Boundary Commissions Act 1992[1] that Schedule 2 to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 should be amended to provide that the future 'building blocks' for constituencies in Northern Ireland should be district electoral areas (DEAs), not wards.

8. At meetings which the Commission held prior to the publication of their Provisional Recommendations, political parties advanced the view that DEA boundaries should be respected as far as possible to facilitate the organisation of the parties and minimise the risk of confusion among the electorate. At Local Inquiries, however, few references were made to DEA boundaries and there was only limited evidence to suggest that DEAs are representative of local communities.[2]

9. At the outset of the Review, the electors in each of 24 wards were divided between constituencies, as was the case in an almost identical number of DEAs. In the case of all wards and some DEAs this was due to the loss of synchronisation which had occurred between reviews conducted by the Local Government Boundaries and District Electoral Area Commissioners, and that of the Commission. Since that synchronisation was possible for the present Review, no wards are divided between constituencies by the Commission's present recommendations. However, under the recommendations, 13 DEAs are partly in one constituency and partly in another.

10. Rules in accordance with which recommendations of the DEAC are made do not include principles affecting geographical considerations or inconveniences attendant on alterations of boundaries or the need to have regard to local ties as is the case with the Commission's Review of constituencies. However, in practice, not only the LGBC but also the DEAC sought to take account of these considerations.[3] DEA boundaries should then, at least in part, be a reflection of those geographical considerations and local ties which the Commission are obliged to take account of by virtue of the Statutory Rules for the Redistribution of Seats. Some concern may be felt that constituency boundaries cannot approximate more closely to those of DEAs and that, as a result, some confusion may arise in the course of local government and parliamentary elections.

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1 HC. Debs, Vol.210, Cols.190 to 198, 23 June, 1992.

2 See Report of the assistant Commissioner who held a Local Inquiry in Belfast, para. 30 and Report of the assistant Commissioner who held a Local Inquiry in Omagh, paras 59 and 60, both reproduced at Appendix E.

3 These included settlement patterns, topographical features and special geographic situations, sense of local community and communication and transport links. See *Review of Local Government Boundaries. Report by the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner, Dr M N Hayes* (HMSO, June 1992) para 3.4 and *Recommendations for the Grouping of Wards into District Electoral Areas for the purpose of Local Government Elections in Northern Ireland. Report by the District Electoral Areas Commissioner Dr Maurice Hayes* (HMSO, December 1992), para.4.2.

11. A number of factors have led the Commission to recommend that 13 DEAs be divided between constituencies. The Commission believe that DEA boundaries do not always fully respect local ties. In some instances, local ties between adjoining wards even in different local government districts (LGDs) appear stronger than ties between the wards comprising the DEA. Although this appears to be more so in the Greater Belfast area, it is also a factor which contributed to decisions to divide DEAs elsewhere. In other cases, some DEAs possess unusual characteristics in terms of shape or geographical features.[1] In Belfast, DEAs have electorates of about 20,000 electors. Their adoption as 'building blocks' in the Belfast City Council area would not be practical and could only be achieved at the expense of electoral equality and greater divergence in the size of electorates between adjacent constituencies. The same is also the case outside Belfast where many DEAs are in excess of 10,000 electors.

12. DEAs therefore represent too large a unit to be contemplated as 'building blocks' and do not always represent discernible, compact communities. Accordingly, the Commission believe that it would be inappropriate for them to be restricted by the DEA framework and that wards should remain the basic unit for constructing constituencies.

Review of Boundary Procedures

13. In representations, both the Alliance Party for Northern Ireland and Sinn Fein proposed that the procedure for reviewing local government, Northern Ireland Assembly and parliamentary constituency boundaries should be simplified and that there should be some amalgamation of procedures. As already mentioned, the LGBC, DEAC and the Commission all have regard to the same or similar factors when formulating their recommendations and persons appointed as the LGBC have also served as the DEAC. There is therefore some expectation that the LGBC and DEAC reviews will now be undertaken by the same person.

14. The Commission consider it essential that their work should remain independent of that of the LGBC and DEAC. However, any changes in the arrangements for determining ward, DEA or LGD boundaries are relevant to the work of the Commission. They are therefore anxious to be kept informed of the progress of the review of these procedures, which was announced in Parliament in 1993.[2]

Period for receipt of representations

15. Section 5 of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 provides that representations with respect to published recommendations of the Commission should be made within one month of publication of the notice of the recommendations. The House of Commons Home Affairs Committee recommended in 1986 that this period should be extended to two months.[3] In their reply[4] the Government accepted this recommendation. The Commission note that no effect has been given to this undertaking yet the period allowed for the receipt of representations during the LGBC review was recently altered to "one month or such longer period as the Commissioner may determine, being a period not exceeding two months".[5] A standard period for all boundary reviews in Northern Ireland would remove this anomaly.

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1 The unusual shape of some DEAs is noticeable and many were referred to during consideration by Parliament of the District Electoral Areas (Northern Ireland) Order 1993. Official Report. First Standing Committee, 20 January 1993, Col. 11 *et seq.*

2 Official Report, First Standing Committee, 20 January 1993, Col.9.

3 *House of Commons Second Report from the Home Affairs Committee (Sessions 1986-87) Redistribution of Seats* (HC.97-I, 1986) p.ix, para. 30.

4 *The Government Reply to the Second Report from the Home Affairs Committee, Session 1986-87, HC.97-1,* (Cm.308, 1988) p.5, para. 2.2.

5 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1992, article 43.

16. During the Review, the Ulster Unionist Council pointed out that the present time limit of one month set for the receipt of representations was too tight to allow for preparation of a detailed response to the Commission's Revised Recommendations. The Commission are also aware that a number of local authorities encountered the same difficulty especially in relation to the Commission's Provisional Recommendations. Given the cycle with which district councils generally meet in Northern Ireland, the Commission would urge that the intended extension of the period for receipt of representations from one to two months should be given statutory expression at the earliest opportunity.

Concluding Remarks

17. During the course of the Review, the Commission met on 28 occasions under the chairmanship of the previous and present Deputy Chairmen. The meetings were attended by the assessors to the Commission. Mr Bob McMurray retired as Registrar General of Births and Deaths for Northern Ireland in early 1994 and his place was taken by Dr Norman Caven. Both Mr McMurray and Dr Caven as well as Mr David Bell (Commissioner of Valuation for Northern Ireland) and Mr Pat Bradley (Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland) gave generously of their time and made important contributions to the deliberations of the Commission. The Commission pay tribute to the sound professional advice they provided, not least that given by Mr Mike Brand, Director of Ordnance Survey for Northern Ireland whose position has already been mentioned.

18. Mr John Fisher was appointed Secretary to the Commission in 1988. Mr Fisher was responsible for establishing the offices of the Commission for the purpose of the Review and for implementing decisions and furthering the work of the Commission throughout. He has given outstanding service in every aspect of his work and the Commission place on record their gratitude for his service and commitment, as well as that of other members of the Secretariat. Dr Colm McNamee was appointed Senior Research Officer in September 1992 and served in that capacity until September 1994. Mrs Marion Kavanagh joined the Secretariat in November 1992 and served as Administrator. Mrs Ruth Osborne temporarily replaced Mrs Kavanagh for the period February to July 1994 at a particularly difficult time when public Local Inquiries were being held. The Commission also place on record their thanks to Miss Regina Gammon, Personal Secretary, who deferred her retirement from public service to facilitate the conclusion of the Review.

19. Lastly, the Commission wish to express how much they are indebted to the contribution made to their work by the late Mr Justice Higgins under whose guidance as Deputy Chairman much was achieved before his resignation in anticipation of his appointment as a Lord Justice of Appeal.

John K Pringle
Deputy Chairman

David Clement

George Duffy

John R Fisher
Secretary to the Commission

20 June, 1995

RULES FOR REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS

The rules

1. —(1) The number of constituencies in Great Britain shall not be substantially greater or less than 613.

(2) The number of constituencies in Scotland shall not be less than 71.

(3) The number of constituencies in Wales shall not be less than 35.

(4) The number of constituencies in Northern Ireland shall not be greater than 18 or less than 16, and shall be 17 unless it appears to the Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland that Northern Ireland should for the time being be divided into 16 or (as the case may be) into 18 constituencies.

2. Every constituency shall return a single member.

3. There shall continue to be a constituency which shall include the whole of the City of London and the name of which shall refer to the City of London.

4. —(1) So far as is practicable having regard to rules 1 to 3 -

(a) in England and Wales, -

(i) no county or any part of a county shall be included in a constituency which includes the whole or part of any other county or the whole or part of a London borough,

(ii) no London borough or any part of a London borough shall be included in a constituency which includes the whole or part of any other London borough,

(b) in Scotland, regard shall be had to the boundaries of local authority areas,

(c) in Northern Ireland, no ward shall be included partly in one constituency and partly in another.

(2) In sub-paragraph (1)(b) above "area" and "local authority" have the same meanings as in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

5. The electorate of any constituency shall be as near the electoral quota as is practicable having regard to rules 1 to 4; and a Boundary Commission may depart from the strict application of rule 4 if it appears to them that a departure is desirable to avoid an excessive disparity between the electorate of any constituency and that of neighbouring constituencies in the part of the United Kingdom with which they are concerned.

6. A Boundary Commission may depart from the strict application of rules 4 and 5 if special geographical considerations, including in particular the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency, appear to them to render a departure desirable.

7. It shall not be the duty of a Boundary Commission to aim at giving full effect in all circumstances to the above rules, but they shall take account, so far as they reasonably can -

(a) of the inconveniences attendant on alterations of constituencies other than alterations made for the purposes of rule 4, and

(b) of any local ties which would be broken by such alterations.

8. In the application of rule 5 to each part of the United Kingdom for which there is a Boundary Commission -

(a) the expression "electoral quota" means a number obtained by dividing the electorate for that part of the United Kingdom by the number of constituencies in it existing on the enumeration date,

(b) the expression "electorate" means -

(i) in relation to a constituency, the number of persons whose names appear on the register of parliamentary electors in force on the enumeration date under the Representation of the People Acts for the constituency,

(ii) in relation to the part of the United Kingdom, the aggregate electorate as defined in sub-paragraph (i) above of all the constituencies in that part,

(c) the expression "enumeration date" means, in relation to any report of a Boundary Commission under this Act, the date on which the notice with respect to that report is published in accordance with section 5(1) of this Act.

9. In this Schedule, a reference to a rule followed by a number is a reference to the rule set out in the correspondingly numbered paragraph of this Schedule.

BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

FOURTH PERIODICAL REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES
EXPLANATORY NOTE

The role of the Boundary Commission is to keep under continuous review the number, names and boundaries of the parliamentary constituencies into which Northern Ireland is divided and to make recommendations to the Secretary of State. The Commission are also required to make periodic recommendations as to the number of members which should be returned to any future Northern Ireland Assembly by each constituency.

2. The Commission are established by the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986. The Act also lays down the procedure to be followed by the Commission when formulating their recommendations.

Background

3. There are four permanent Boundary Commissions in the United Kingdom; one each for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The Commissions are required to conduct a general review of all constituencies every eight to 12 years.

4. The Commission are an independent and impartial body. The outcome of previous elections or the system of election employed do not enter their consideration when deciding recommendations. Neither do the Commission consider the effects of their recommendations on future voting patterns or traditional loyalties and affiliations.

5. The Speaker of the House of Commons is the Chairman of each of the four Boundary Commissions. There are three other members of the Commission for Northern Ireland. The Deputy Chairman who presides over the Commission's meetings is a judge of the High Court. He is appointed by the Lord Chief Justice for Northern Ireland. The Commission's two other members are appointed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

6. In addition, the Commission have as assessors the Registrar General for Northern Ireland, the Commissioner of Valuation for Northern Ireland and the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland. Although not formally appointed an assessor, the Commission also rely on the advice and assistance of the Director of Ordnance Survey for Northern Ireland.

7. The Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland are sometimes confused with the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner (appointed periodically to review the number, names and boundaries of the district councils in Northern Ireland and the wards into which they are divided) and the District Electoral Areas Commissioner (appointed to review the grouping of wards into district electoral areas for the purpose of voting at local elections). The Boundary Commission are a separate and independent body.

Timing of Reviews

8. The Third General Reviews of the Boundary Commissions were conducted between 1976 and 1983 and save for changes made in the course of interim reviews in Great Britain, the present constituencies on which the 1992 General Election was conducted are the result of those Reviews.

9. The Boundary Commissions Act 1992 recently amended the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986. It set time limits by which the Commissions must next report. Whereas previously the Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland would have had until 1997 to report, the Commission are now required to report no later than 31 December 1994.

Rules

10. When reviewing constituencies and making recommendations the Commission are required to give effect to the Rules for Redistribution of Seats which form Schedule 2 to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986. The Rules are reproduced as an appendix to this note.[1]

11. Rule 14 of the Rules states:

> "The number of constituencies in Northern Ireland shall not be greater than 18 or less than 16, and shall be 17 unless it appears to the Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland that Northern Ireland should for the time being be divided into 16 or (as the case may be) into 18 constituencies."

12. When the Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland completed their Third Periodical Review in 1982 they recommended the creation of the present 17 constituencies. The Government accepted this recommendation.

13. The Commission are of the opinion that they would be justified in recommending a number of constituencies other than 17 only to reduce or alleviate difficulties experienced in applying the Rules for the Redistribution of Seats on the basis of 17 constituencies. Considerations relating solely to an alleged under representation of Northern Ireland unconnected with any difficulty in applying those Rules do not appear to the Commission to fall within their jurisdiction.

14. In outline, the other Rules provide that:

(a) so far as is practicable having regard to other Rules, no wards shall be included partly in one constituency and partly in another. Although 29 wards in Northern Ireland are currently split between constituencies these are the result of two reviews of local government boundaries since the Commission last reported. The Commission hope to regularise this position during the current review;

(b) constituency electorates should be as near the electoral quota as is practicable having regard to other Rules. The Commission may depart from the strict application of (a) if it appears desirable to avoid an excessive disparity between any constituency electorate and the electoral quota or between the electorate or any constituency and that of neighbouring constituencies. The electoral quota is the average number of electors and is found by dividing the total number of **parliamentary** (not local) electors in Northern Ireland by the number of **existing constituencies**;

(c) departures from the strict application of (a) and (b) are permissible if special geographical considerations including, in particular, the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency appear to render a departure desirable; and

(d) although not under a duty to aim at giving full effect in all circumstances to the above Rules, the Commission shall take account, so far as they reasonably can, of the inconveniences attendant on alterations of constituencies (other than alterations made for the purpose of avoiding wards being divided between constituencies) and of any local ties which would be broken by such alterations.

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1 These are reproduced in Appendix A to the Report.

Names of Constituencies and Designation

15. In making recommendations, the Commission are required to recommend a name and designation for each proposed constituency. When constituencies remain largely unchanged, the Commission usually retain existing names. For new or substantially different constituencies, the Commission consider that names should normally reflect the name of the area wholly or principally contained in the constituency. However, if names recommended by the Commission are strongly objected to and there is a suitable alternative which generally commands greater local support, the Commission may well wish to revise their recommendation in favour of that alternative.

16. In line with the policy followed by the Boundary Commission for England, the Commission consider that, as a general principle, where constituencies contain more than a small rural element they should normally be designated as county constituencies. Otherwise they should be designated as borough constituencies. The designation affects the level of a candidate's expenses allowable at elections. The level of expenses is slightly lower in borough constituencies, to reflect the lower costs of running a campaign in a compact, usually urban, area. There are currently four borough constituencies in Northern Ireland, covering Belfast.

Practice

17. Before formulating and publishing their proposals the Commission consult the major Northern lreland political parties on broad issues of policy. In formulating their Provisional Recommendations for particular areas, the Commission do not consult local authorities or other locally interested groups. In common with the Boundary Commission for England, the Northern lreland Commission consider that they should take the initiative in preparing Provisional Recommendations from all the information available to them. Proposals are therefore formulated by the Commission from a position of independence and impartiality and are not influenced by any other particular viewpoint or opinion. Once proposals are published, the statutory procedures allow for a full public debate and interested parties have the opportunity to make known their views.

18. The Commissions do not base their Recommendations on long term or speculative projected electorates or on actual or projected populations. The Commission are required to base their Recommendations on the number of electors on the electoral register at the start of a Review and they are unable to allow for or take account of any under-registration of electors which is sometimes claimed to occur in some areas. Therefore the Commission must base their Recommendations on the parliamentary electoral register as it stands at the start of the review on the enumeration date, rather than on any subsequent register, or local government electoral register. However in choosing between schemes which are otherwise permissible under the Rules, the Commission will take into account growth in the electorate which has either occurred since the enumeration date or which they are satisfied will occur in the near future.

19. The Commission are not required specifically by the Rules to have regard to local authority boundaries, save for ward boundaries. The Commission, however, are aware of the desirability of avoiding the division of district electoral areas, that is the groups of wards for which councillors are elected to district councils in Northern lreland. However, this may not be possible to avoid in practice. It is also inevitable that, since there are 17 constituencies in Northern lreland and 26 district councils, some district councils will be divided between constituencies. The Commission may take into account Area Board or other administrative boundaries; geographical features; major roads, railway, and other lines of communication; the relationship between rural and urban areas; and the relationship between market towns and the areas which they serve.

Procedures

20. At the start of a Review the Commission are required to give written notice to the Secretary of State of their intention to consider making a report. The Secretary of State must then publish a copy of the notice in the Belfast Gazette. The date of publication of the notice becomes the enumeration date for the Review and the Commission's proposals must be based on the number of electors on the electoral register, and the electoral quota, on that date. The Commission gave notice by letter to the Secretary of State on 16 March 1993 and the Secretary of State published a copy of the notice in the Belfast Gazette on 19 March 1993 which is therefore the enumeration date for the purpose of the Review.

Provisional Recommendations

21. The Commission obtain the electorate figures on the enumeration date directly from the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland (CEO). The CEO is the electoral registration officer for the whole of Northern Ireland. When the figures have been received, the electoral quota is calculated by dividing the total numbers of electors in Northern Ireland by the number of existing constituencies, which in Northern Ireland is 17.

22. This establishes the average electorate of the constituencies within Northern Ireland. Within the constraints of the Rules the Commission aim to establish constituencies which contain electorates close to the average and to avoid large disparities. The number of parliamentary electors on the electoral register on the enumeration date for the last review and the quota established for the purpose of that review was 1,040,506 and 61,206 respectively. The corresponding figures in respect of the present Review are 1,153,477 and 67,852.

Publication

23. When the Commission have decided on their Provisional Recommendations, they are required to publish, in at least one newspaper circulating in each constituency, a notice stating:

(a) the effect of the proposed recommendations, that is to say the name, designation, composition (names of wards), and electorate of each proposed constituency;

(b) an address within the constituency where the Provisional Recommendations may be inspected; and

(c) that written representations may be made to the Commission about the Provisional Recommendations within one month after the date of publication of the notice.

Representations

24. The Commission are required to consider all written representations made to them within the statutory one month period. If the Commission receive representations objecting to the Provisional Recommendations for any constituency from an interested district council or a body of 100 or more electors, they are required to hold a Local Inquiry before proceeding with any recommendations for that constituency.

Local Inquiry

25. An Inquiry is conducted on behalf of the Commission by an assistant Commissioner (normally a practising lawyer) who is selected from a panel of assistant Commissioners appointed by the Secretary of State. The Inquiry is conducted at a convenient, public place within the constituency under review, usually one of the district council offices. Any interested person or organisation may, if they wish, attend in person or send a representative to make known their

views, whether or not they have previously submitted written representations to the Commission. Indeed the Commission would want to encourage this.

Revised and Modified Recommendations

26. The Commission consider the representations, the assistant Commissioner's report, matters discussed at a Local Inquiry, and any other relevant information. If they decide to revise their Provisional Recommendations, Revised Recommendations are published and further comments are invited.

27. The Commission take into consideration any representations made about Revised Recommendations. However, even if objections are received, the Commission are not obliged to hold a further Local Inquiry into the constituencies concerned, although they may do so at their discretion. The Commission are anxious to avoid the expense of second Inquiries wherever possible. It is hoped that first Inquiries will be full and complete and that only exceptionally will it be necessary to hold a second Inquiry to obtain more information or ascertain local opinion on aspects not considered previously.

Final Recommendations and Report

28. When the Commission have decided on their Final Recommendations, they submit a written report to the Secretary of State. The report describes the Review, the procedures followed, the representations received and the considerations to which the Commission have had regard in finalising their recommendations. All interested parties are notified of the Commission's Final Recommendations for their respective areas with a brief explanation of the Commission's reasons for their recommendations.

Order in Council

29. As soon as may be after the Commission have submitted a report, the Secretary of State is required to lay the report before Parliament. If the report recommends alterations to existing constituencies, the Secretary of State must also lay a draft Order in Council giving effect to the recommendations, with or without modifications. If modifications are proposed, the Secretary of State is required to lay a statement of the reasons for them at the same time. The draft Order must be debated and approved (or rejected) by both Houses of Parliament. If the draft Order in Council is not approved, the Secretary of State may amend the draft and lay the amended draft before Parliament for approval.

30. Once the Order in Council has been made the new constituencies take effect at the next following general election. Any by-elections held in the meantime have to be held on the basis of the old constituencies. The validity of an Order in Council, once made, may not be called in question in any legal proceedings.

Northern Ireland Assembly

31. In addition to their responsibilities for recommending the number, names and boundaries of Parliamentary constituencies in Northern Ireland, the Commission are required under the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973 to submit a supplementary report. This report recommends the number of members which should be returned to any future Northern Ireland Assembly by each of the proposed parliamentary constituencies.

32. Although the Assembly was dissolved in 1986, this has not affected the Commission's statutory task. Consequently, the Commission are required to review and to recommend the total

number of members that would be elected to an Assembly, and the distribution of that number of members among the Parliamentary constituencies.

33. The number of members of the Assembly is currently fixed at 85, each parliamentary constituency returning five members. The Commission have the power to recommend that the number of members should be altered but that power is subject to the limitation that they are not to make a recommendation whose effect would be substantially to alter the number of members. But the Commission's recommendations must also be such as to secure, so far as practicable, that the ratio of the electorate of each constituency to the number of members to be returned by that constituency is the same throughout.

34. In making their recommendations, the Commission follow the same procedures for publishing their Provisional Recommendations and inviting representations as are observed in the review of parliamentary constituencies and the Commission's proposals are published at the same time as their recommendations affecting parliamentary constituencies.

Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland
March 1993

BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND
PROVISIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The electorates of the proposed constituencies and of their constituent wards are listed below. The electorate is the number of persons whose names appear on the register of parliamentary electors in force on the enumeration date for the present Review, 19th March 1993.

1. Belfast East Borough Constituency

The 17 Belfast local government district wards of:

Ballyhackamore	4555	Orangefield	4199
Ballymacarrett	3729	Ravenhill	4152
Ballynafeigh	3995	Rosetta	4131
Belmont	4468	Stormont	4607
Bloomfield	4201	Stranmillis	4003
Botanic	3953	Sydenham	4001
Cherryvalley	4334	The Mount	4127
Island	3779	Woodstock	4046
Knock	4126		

Total Electorate **70,406**

2. Belfast North Borough Constituency

The 17 Belfast local government district wards of:

Ardoyne	4305	Fortwilliam	3769
Ballysillan	4356	Glencairn	3547
Bellevue	3706	Highfield	3868
Castleview	3899	Legoniel	4130
Cavehill	3989	New Lodge	4496
Chichester Park	3994	Shankill	3678
Cliftonville	4246	Water Works	4594
Crumlin	4036	Woodvale	3824
Duncairn	3628		

Total Electorate **68,065**

3. Belfast West Borough Constituency

The 17 Belfast local government district wards of:

Andersonstown	4444	Ladybrook	4469
Beechmount	4156	Malone	4342
Blackstaff	3729	Musgrave	4044
Clonard	4119	Shaftesbury	4038
Falls	4012	Upper Malone	3785
Falls Park	4506	Upper Springfield	3985
Finaghy	3916	Whiterock	3874
Glencolin	4271	Windsor	3998
Glen Road	4467		

Total Electorate **70,155**

4. Blackwater County Constituency

The whole of Armagh local government district:

Abbey Park	1425	Killeen	1707
Ballymartrim	1648	Killylea	1565
Callan Bridge	1682	Laurelvale	1663
Carrigatuke	1543	Loughgall	1743
Charlemont	1656	Markethill	1726
Derrynoose	1551	Milford	1533
Demesne	1630	Observatory	1801
Downs	1526	Poyntz Pass	1661
Hamiltonsbawn	1853	Rich Hill	1859
Hockley	1785	Tandragee	1819
Keady	1670	The Mall	1662
Total	36,708		

The 19 Dungannon local government district wards of:

Altmore	1506	Coolhill	1446
Aughnacloy	1463	Donaghmore	1495
Ballygawley	1516	Drumglass	1340
Ballysaggart	1617	Killyman	1520
Benburb	1527	Killymeal	1441
Caledon	1520	Moy	1527
Castlecaulfield	1601	Moygashel	1355
Coalisland North	1599	Mullaghmore	1366
Coalisland South	1514	Washing Bay	1576
Coalisland West and Newmills	1509		
Total	28,438		

Total Electorate **65,146**

5. Castlereagh and Newtownards County Constituency

The whole of Castlereagh local government district:

Ballyhanwood	2468	Gilnahirk	2021
Beechill	2145	Graham's Bridge	2302
Cairnshill	2149	Hillfoot	2250
Carrowreagh	2136	Knockbracken	1842
Carryduff East	2311	Lisnasharragh	1887
Carryduff West	1903	Lower Braniel	2011
Cregagh	1802	Minnowburn	2108
Downshire	1889	Moneyreagh	2455
Dundonald	2057	Newtownbreda	2214
Enler	2254	Tullycarnet	2131
Galwally	1901	Upper Braniel	1948
		Wynchurch	1816
Total	48,000		

The seven Ards local government district wards of:

Ballyrainey	2067	Gregstown	2407
Bradshaw's Brae	2297	Movilla	2325
Central	2149	Whitespots	2389
Glen	2100		
Total	15,734		

The four North Down local government district wards of:

Cultra	2057	Holywood Priory	2023
Holywood Demesne	2235	Loughview	2161
Total	8,476		

Total Electorate **72,210**

6. East Antrim County Constituency

The whole of Larne local government district:

Antiville	1430	Gardenmore	1640
Ballycarry	1523	Glenarm	1343
Ballyloran	1442	Glynn	1376
Blackcave	1512	Harbour	1504
Carncastle	1550	Island Magee	1539
Carnlough	1478	Kilwaughter	1623
Central	1664	Town Parks	1529
Craigy Hill	1451		
Total	22,604		

The whole of Carrickfergus local government district:

Blackhead	1571	Killycrot	1431
Boneybefore	1430	Knockagh	1384
Bluefield	1525	Love Lane	1290
Burleigh Hill	1836	Milebush	1498
Clipperstown	1468	Northland	1257
Eden	1751	Sunnylands	1322
Gortalee	1248	Whitehead	1528
Greenisland	1384	Woodburn	1613
		Victoria	1588
Total	25,124		

The nine Newtownabbey local government district wards of:

Abbey	2335	Monkstown	2243
Cloughfern	2277	Rostulla	2084
Coole	2251	Valley	2456
Dunanney	1849	Whitehouse	2126
Jordanstown	2400		
Total	20,021		

Total Electorate **67,749**

7. East Londonderry County Constituency

The whole of Coleraine local government district:

Agivey	1567		Kilrea	1597	
Atlantic	1856		Knocklynn	1658	
Ballysally	1655		Macosquin	1634	
Castlerock	1799		Mount Sandel	1555	
Central	1641		Portstewart	1767	
Churchland	1756		Royal Portrush	1788	
Cross Glebe	1639		Ringsend	1533	
Dundooan	1644		Strand	1674	
Dunluce	1602		The Cuts	1944	
Garvagh	1781		University	1554	
Hopefield	1843		Waterside	1841	
Total		37,328			

The whole of Limavady local government district:

Aghanloo	1196		Gresteel	1432	
Ballykelly	1219		Greystone	1472	
Coolessan	1289		Magilligan	1234	
Dungiven	1351		Rathbrady	1403	
Enagh	1725		Roeside	1195	
Feeny	1205		The Highlands	1143	
Forest	1374		Upper Glenshane	1218	
Glack	1239				
Total		19,695			

The six Magherafelt local government district wards of:

Bellaghy	1615		Swatragh	1787	
Gulladuff	1631		Valley	1635	
Maghera	1719		Upperlands	1478	
Total		9,865			

Total Electorate **66,888**

8. Fermanagh and South Tyrone County Constituency

The whole of Fermanagh local government district:

Ballinamallard	1567		Irvinestown	1619	
Belcoo and Garrison	1661		Kesh, Ederney and Lack	2132	
Belleek and Boa	1632		Lisbellaw	1683	
Boho, Cleenish and Letterbreen	1809		Lisnarrick	1352	
Brookeborough	1669		Lisnaskea	1866	
Castlecoole	1989		Maguire's Bridge	1687	
Derrygonnelly	1764		Derrylin	1600	
Devenish	1779		Newtownbutler	1766	
Donagh	1620		Portora	1840	
			Rosslea	1654	

8. Fermanagh and South Tyrone County Constituency (continued)

Erne	1814		Rossorry	1732	
Florence Court and Kinawley	1758		Tempo	1627	
Total		39,620			

The three Dungannon local government district wards of:

Augher	1402		Fivemiletown	1419	
Clogher	1410				
Total		4,231			

The 17 Omagh local government district wards of:

Beragh	1477		Fintona	1523	
Camowen	1521		Gortrush	1634	
Clanabogan	1543		Lisanelly	1533	
Coolnagard	1683		Killyclogher	1434	
Dergmoney	1594		Newtownsaville	1492	
Dromore	1458		Sixmilecross	1393	
Drumquin	1436		Strule	1396	
Drumragh	1582		Trillick	1490	
Fairy Water	1409				
Total		25,598			

Total Electorate **69,449**

9. Foyle County Constituency

The whole of Derry local government district:

Altnagelvin	2341		Enagh	2262	
Ballynashallog	2501		Foyle Springs	2316	
Banagher	1911		Holly Mount	1995	
Beechwood	2018		Kilfennan	2197	
Brandywell	1967		Lisnagelvin	2308	
Carn Hill	2144		New Buildings	2241	
Caw	2000		Pennyburn	2400	
Claudy	1949		Rosemount	2155	
Clondermot	1986		Springtown	2257	
Creggan Central	2003		Shantallow East	2060	
Creggan South	1851		Shantallow West	2173	
Crevagh	2482		Strand	2296	
Culmore	2308		The Diamond	1966	
Ebrington	2041		Westland	1870	
Eglinton	2167		Victoria	2034	
Total		64,199			

Total Electorate **64,199**

10. Lagan Valley County Constituency

The whole of Lisburn local government district:

Ballinderry	2376	Kilwee	2278
Ballymacbrennan	2367	Knockmore	2203
Ballymacash	2376	Lagan Valley	2435
Ballymacoss	2610	Lambeg	2162
Blaris	2421	Lisnagarvy	2326
Collin Glen	2551	Maghaberry	2288
Derryaghy	2315	Magheralave	2232
Dromara	2548	Maze	2533
Drumbo	2406	Moira	2499
Dunmurry	2307	Poleglass	2499
Glenavy	2554	Old Warren	2092
Harmony Hill	2360	Seymour Hill	2106
Hilden	2357	Tonagh	2149
Hillhall	2274	Twinbrook	2216
Hillsborough	2549	Wallace Park	2279
Total	70,668		

Total Electorate **70,668**

11. Mid Down County Constituency

The 19 Down local government district wards of:

Ardglass	1820	Dundrum	1639
Audley's Acre	1700	Dunmore	1774
Ballymaglave	1836	Killyleagh	1846
Ballymote	1703	Killough	1762
Ballynahinch East	1798	Kilmore	2018
Castlewellan	1798	Quoile	1907
Cathedral	1832	Saintfield	1842
Crossgar	1896	Seaforde	1676
Derryboy	1809	Strangford	1725
Drumaness	1974		
Total	34,355		

The seven Ards local government district wards of:

Ballygowan	2203	Killinchy	2012
Comber East	2126	Lisbane	2020
Comber North	1933	Scrabo	1827
Comber West	2314		
Total	14,435		

11. Mid Down County Constituency (continued)

The nine Banbridge local government district wards of:

Ballyward	1561	Katesbridge	1545
Bannside	1514	Loughbrickland	1575
Dromore North	1759	Quilly	1564
Dromore South	1583	Rathfriland	1741
Gransha	1521		
Total	14,363		

Total Electorate **63,153**

12. Mid Ulster County Constituency

The whole of Strabane local government district:

Artigarvan	1573	Newtownstewart	1579
Ballycolman	1568	North	1673
Clare	1726	Plumbridge	1447
Castlederg	1566	Sion Mills	1516
Dunnamanagh	1483	Slievekirk	1494
East	1687	South	1798
Finn	I552	Victoria Bridge	1530
Glenderg	1665	West	1694
Total	25,551		

The whole of Cookstown local government district:

Ardboe	1475	Newbuildings	1402
Coagh	1298	Oaklands	1240
Dunnamore	1323	Oldtown	1361
Gortalowry	1427	Pomeroy	1320
Killycolpy	1440	Sandholes	1264
Killymoon	1434	Stewartstown	1257
Lissan	1279	The Loop	1488
Moneymore	1330	Tullagh	1525
Total	21,863		

The four Omagh local government district wards of:

Drumnakilly	1584	Owenkillew	1391
Gortin	1361	Termon	1485
Total	5,821		

The 10 Magherafelt local government district wards of:

Ballymaguigan	1538	Lecumpher	1462
Castledawson	1678	Lower Glenshane	1700
Draperstown	1628	Tobermore	1486
Glebe	1496	Town Parks East	1694
Knockcloghrim	1676	Town Parks West	1650
Total	16,008		

Total Electorate **69,243**

13. North Antrim County Constituency

The whole of Ballymena local government district:

Academy	1668	Fair Green	1733
Ahoghill	1981	Galgorm	1714
Ardeevin	1893	Glenravel	1832
Ballee	1752	Glenwhirry	1815
Ballykeel	1668	Grange	1833
Ballyloughan	1737	Harryville	1710
Broughshane	1865	Kells	1954
Castle Demesne	1731	Moat	1581
Craigywarren	1748	Park	1708
Cullybackey	1930	Portglenone	1843
Dunclug	1744	Slemish	1624
Dunminning	1732	Summerfield	1844
Total	42,640		

The whole of Ballymoney local government district:

Ballyhoe and Corkey	1023	Killoquin Lower	1107
Benvardin	1056	Killoquin Upper	1050
Carnany	1189	Knockaholet	1069
Clogh Mills	1130	Newhill	1101
Dervock	1086	Route	1156
Dunloy	1120	Seacon	1279
Fairhill	1180	Stranocum	1026
Glebe	I244	The Vow	1049
Total	17,865		

The whole of Moyle local government district:

Armoy	653	Glenariff	852
Ballylough	648	Glendun	774
Bonamargy and Rathlin	793	Glenshesk	673
Bushmills	661	Glentaisie	668
Carnmoon	637	Kinbane	663
Dalriada	834	Knocklayd	719
Dunseverick	633	Moss-side and Moyarget	611
Glenaan	891		
Total	10,710		

Total Electorate **71,215**

14. North Down County Constituency

The nine Ards local government district wards of:

Ballywalter	2118	Loughries	2279
Carrowdore	1989	Millisle	2113
Donaghadee North	2372	Portaferry	2186
Donaghadee South	2198	Portavogie	2256
Kircubbin	2040		
Total	19,551		

14. North Down County Constituency (continued)

The 21 North Down local government district wards of:

Ballycrochan	2706	Craigavad	2084
Ballyholme	2009	Crawfordsburn	2044
Ballymaconnell	2210	Dufferin	2046
Ballymagee	2204	Groomsport	2232
Bangor Castle	2183	Harbour	2147
Bloomfield	2323	Princetown	2216
Broadway	2343	Rathgael	2056
Bryansburn	2351	Silverstream	2102
Churchill	2336	Spring Hill	2306
Clandeboye	2255	Whitehill	2149
Conlig	2284		
Total	46,586		

Total Electorate **66,137**

15. Newry and Mourne County Constituency

The whole of Newry and Mourne local government district:

Annalong	1935	Fathom	1858
Ballybot	1845	Forkhill	2090
Bessbrook	1737	Kilkeel Central	2307
Binnian	1749	Kilkeel South	2135
Burren and Kilbroney	1822	Lisnacree	1704
Camlough	1766	Mayobridge	1837
Clonallan	2217	Newtownhamilton	1691
Creggan	1700	Rostrevor	1992
Crossmaglen	1772	Seaview	2145
Daisy Hill	1920	Silver Bridge	1893
Derryleckagh	2063	Spelga	1769
Derrymore	1843	St. Patrick's	2168
Donaghmore	1748	St. Mary's	1918
Drumgullion	2038	Tullyhappy	1749
Drumalane	1967	Windsor Hill	1993
Total	57,371		

The four Down local government district wards of:

Donard	1786	Shimna	1783
Murlough	1694	Tollymore	1611
Total	6,874		

Total Electorate **64,245**

16. South Antrim County Constituency

The whole of Antrim local government district:

Aldergrove	1649	Masserene	1730
Balloo	1501	Parkgate	1500
Ballycraigy	1598	Randalstown	1548
Clady	1621	Shilvodan	1505
Cranfield	1598	Springfarm	1882
Crumlin	1903	Steeple	1554
Drumanaway	1507	Stiles	1695
Farranshane	1565	Templepatrick	1747
Fountain Hill	1752	Toome	1568
Greystone	1535		
Total	30,958		

The 16 Newtownabbey local government district wards of:

Ballyclare North	2363	Collinbridge	2153
Ballyclare South	2269	Doagh	2099
Ballyduff	2305	Glebe	2317
Ballyhenry	2387	Glengormley	2338
Ballynure	1850	Hawthorne	1953
Ballyrobert	2701	Hightown	2092
Burnthill	2339	Mallusk	2372
Carnmoney	2280	Mossley	2269
Total	36,087		

Total Electorate **67,045**

17. Upper Bann County Constituency

The whole of Craigavon local government district:

Annagh	1895	Drumnamoe	2143
Aghagallon	2282	Edenderry	2350
Ballybay	1879	Kernan	2239
Ballyoran	1910	Killycomain	2061
Bleary	2250	Knocknashane	2154
Brownstown	2400	Magheralin	2177
Corcrain	1989	Mourneview	1919
Court	2256	Parklake	1962
Church	1937	Taghnevan	2078
Derrytrasna	2359	Tavanagh	1897
Donaghcloney	1799	The Birches	2073
Drumgask	2153	Waringstown	2179
Drumgor	2139	Woodville	2334
Total	54,814		

17. Upper Bann County Constituency (continued)

The eight Banbridge local government district wards of:

Ballydown	1692	Gilford	1517
Banbridge West	1723	Lawrencetown	1542
Edenderry	1578	Seapatrick	1503
Fort	1536	The Cut	1599
Total	12,690		

Total Electorate **67,504**

TOTAL NORTHERN IRELAND ELECTORATE **1,153,477**

Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland
January 1994

BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND
STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR
PROVISIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Principles

1. The Rules which the Commission must give effect to when reviewing representation in the House of Commons and making recommendations for constituencies in Northern Ireland are set out in Schedule 2 to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986. A copy of the Rules is attached to this statement.[1] In formulating their Provisional Recommendations the Commission have been guided by the following principles, which are intended to reflect the provisions of the Rules:

a) to adjust constituency boundaries so as to ensure that no local government wards are split between constituencies;
b) to promote electoral equality to aim at, in the first instance, constituency electorates within a tolerance of 7% (above or below) the electoral quota;
c) to take account as far as reasonable:
   i) of the inconveniences attendant on alterations of constituencies, and
   ii) of any local ties which would be broken by such alterations.

To do so, the Commission have considered it necessary:

i) to have regard as far as practicable to existing constituency boundaries;
ii) to ensure as far as possible that constituency boundaries conform to local government district (LGD) boundaries, district electoral area (DEA) boundaries and other boundaries of local significance;
iii) to respect as far as possible significant economic, geographical and social ties between groups of electors.

No two geographical areas are exactly alike and in applying these principles the Commission have had to strike a careful balance.

2. It should be emphasised that the Commission's Provisional Recommendations do not affect the structure or arrangements for local government or area boards or the services they provide.

Number of Constituencies in Northern Ireland

3. The Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, Schedule 2, Rule 1(4) states that:

"The number of constituencies in Northern Ireland shall not be greater than 18 or less than 16, and shall be 17 unless it appears to the Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland that Northern Ireland should for the time being be divided into 16 or (as the case may be) into 18 constituencies."

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1 The Rules are reproduced in Appendix A to the Report.

During the last review, the Commission received representations to the effect that Northern Ireland was underrepresented in Parliament, and that for this reason the maximum number of seats, 18, should be allocated. After careful consideration the Commission have decided not to alter the number of constituencies in Northern Ireland. At an early stage in the Review, the Commission obtained the opinion of Senior Crown Counsel on whether they would be justified in allocating to Northern Ireland 18 seats on the ground that by comparison with other parts of the United Kingdom Northern Ireland was underrepresented in Parliament. Senior Crown Counsel's opinion was that the Commission would be justified in recommending a number of constituencies other than 17 only to reduce or alleviate difficulties experienced in applying the Rules for Redistribution of Seats on the basis of 17 constituencies; and that considerations relating solely to an alleged underrepresentation of Northern Ireland, unconnected with any difficulty in applying the Rules did not fall within their jurisdiction. The Commission, having considered alternative schemes for 16 and 18 constituencies, are satisfied that there should continue to be 17 constituencies in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland Assembly

4. Although the Northern Ireland Assembly was dissolved in 1986 the Commission still have a statutory task to recommend the number of members which should be returned to the Northern Ireland Assembly by each parliamentary constituency. At present each of the 17 constituencies returns five members at elections to the Assembly. The Commission have recommended that this number should remain the same and that each of the proposed constituencies should return five members, so that the Assembly would have 85 members.

Wards

5. There are 582 local government wards in Northern Ireland but over thirty wards are now divided between constituencies. This is the result of two successive reviews of local government boundaries which have been conducted since the Commission last reported. While the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, Schedule 2, Rule 4(c) states that, so far as is practicable, "no ward shall be included partly in one constituency and partly in another", Rules 5 and 6 provide for the division of wards either to avoid "an excessive disparity between the electorate of any constituency and the electoral quota, or between the electorate of any constituency and that of neighbouring constituencies"; or "if special geographical considerations, including in particular the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency, appear to them to render a departure desirable". Local government wards are indicative of areas which have a community of interest and local political party organisations may be based on wards or groups of wards. Any division of wards between constituencies is therefore likely to break local ties, disrupt political party organisation and confuse the electorate. The Provisional Recommendations accordingly avoid dividing wards.

Other Boundaries

6. The Commission have sought to limit the number and scale of boundary changes proposed and to preserve the integrity of local government districts (LGDs) and district electoral areas (DEAs) wherever practicable. There are 26 LGDs and 101 DEAs (groups of wards for which councillors are elected to district councils). It is therefore inevitable, given the changes there have been in the distribution of the electorate and the shapes of many DEAs that the Commission's proposals continue to divide a number of LGDs and DEAs, between constituencies.

Electoral Quota

7. Rule 5 of the Rules for Redistribution of Seats provides that the electorate of any constituency shall be as near the electoral quota as practicable. Notice announcing the commencement of the Review was published on 19 March 1993. This date became the enumeration date for the purpose of the Review. The electoral quota (EQ) is the number obtained by dividing the total parliamentary electorate of Northern Ireland on the enumeration date by the number of constituencies then existing. On 19 March 1993, the electorate of Northern Ireland was 1,153,477 and the number of constituencies in Northern Ireland was 17. Therefore, the EQ is 67,852.

General Considerations

8. At the outset of the Review, the Commission were faced not only with four borough constituencies in Belfast all substantially below the EQ but with constituencies in the North West and South East of the Province having become significantly above the EQ. The difficulty facing the Commission has been to balance these differences, particularly having regard to the geographical restraints imposed by Lough Neagh.

PROPOSED CONSTITUENCIES

Belfast East, Belfast North and Belfast West Borough Constituencies

9. The electorates of the existing Belfast borough constituencies have diminished considerably since the last review, leaving the Commission with a logical choice, either to extend the boundaries of existing constituencies into adjacent LGDs to bring the Belfast constituency electorates closer to the EQ; or to reduce the number of constituencies in Belfast to three. After careful consideration the Commission have chosen the latter alternative for four main reasons:

a) Extension of the existing Belfast borough constituencies in an even, radial fashion into neighbouring LGDs would create a ripple effect, resulting in unacceptable and uneven variations in the size of electorates of other constituencies in Northern Ireland.

b) By contrast, division of Belfast LGD into three constituencies would allow the outer boundaries of the Belfast constituencies to conform exactly to the LGD boundary, and to the boundaries of area public services. It would also permit close adherence to the pattern of DEAs in Belfast (with only one DEA divided by a constituency boundary) and an even distribution of the number of wards among the three constituencies, each constituency containing 17 wards.

c) The DEAs of Castle, Court and Oldpark on the one hand and Lower Falls and Upper Falls on the other are separated by physical boundaries, the 'peace lines', sealing off areas in the west of the city. The boundary between the constituencies of Belfast North and Belfast West would therefore not only recognise DEA boundaries but also separate the distinct communities which exist. The Commission consider that not to acknowledge this division would ignore the realities of daily life.

d) Careful consideration was given to historic boundaries, to lines of communication such as major roads (including motorways) and railway lines, and to the River Lagan as lines of demarcation; but it was decided that none of these represented an insurmountable barrier to communication and that it was acceptable for constituencies to span these boundaries, roads, railways and the river where other considerations compelled this.

The proposed three Belfast borough constituencies are: **Belfast East**, with an electorate of 70,406 (3.8% above the EQ); **Belfast North**, with an electorate of 68,065 (0.3% above the EQ) and **Belfast West**, with an electorate of 70,155 (3.4% above the EQ). All three constituencies are above the EQ. The Commission note that in every year since the last review was completed, the electorates of the present Belfast borough constituencies have declined and have continued to do so since the Commission announced their Review. In deciding names to recommend for revised constituencies the Commission have an open mind and will accept suitable alternatives which command substantial local support.

East Antrim, North Antrim and South Antrim County Constituencies

10. It was noted that on the enumeration date the parliamentary electorate of Newtownabbey LGD was 56,108 and that such an electorate could form the nucleus of a parliamentary constituency. However, after careful consideration it was felt that Newtownabbey LGD could not form a constituency by itself without seriously disrupting the existing pattern of constituency boundaries in County Antrim (which substantially respect the boundaries of six of the seven County Antrim LGDs) and creating a ripple effect disturbing other constituency boundaries. It was further considered that, as all of the existing County Antrim constituencies are within 5% of the EQ, only slight adjustments were needed to accommodate new ward boundaries.

11. The Provisional Recommendations, nevertheless, take the opportunity to equalise the electorates of the **East Antrim** and **South Antrim** constituencies by transferring the ward of Jordanstown (in Newtownabbey LGD) into the present constituency of East Antrim. The transfer of the ward provides for the constituency boundary to run parallel to Three Mile Water, providing a readily identifiable boundary. Moreover, Jordanstown is part of University DEA which is already divided between the two constituencies and therefore the transfer involves no further disruption to the structure of DEAs. Hence the electorates of the proposed East Antrim and South Antrim county constituencies would be 67,749 (0.2% below the EQ) and 67,045 (1.2% below the EQ) respectively.

12. It is proposed that the boundaries of **North Antrim** county constituency remain unaltered; the constituency has an electorate of 71,215 which is, acceptably, 5% above the EQ and the constituency comprises the three whole LGDs of Ballymena, Ballymoney and Moyle, which the Commission prefer should remain intact.

Foyle and East Londonderry County Constituencies

13. The size of electorate of the present constituency of Foyle is 13.6% above the EQ. The Commission consider that the constituency boundaries should be redrawn to reduce the size of the electorate. On the enumeration date the parliamentary electorate of Derry LGD was 64,199 (5.4% below the EQ) sufficient for it to form a separate constituency without including any part of Strabane LGD. Furthermore, the Commission note the significant and regular increase there has been in the electorate of Derry LGD since the last review of constituencies was concluded. It is proposed therefore that the boundaries of **Foyle** county constituency could be significantly reduced to correspond exactly to those of Derry LGD. The Commission believe that the constituency electorate will increase relative to adjacent constituencies thereby correcting any immediate disparities. The Strabane LGD wards of Artigarvan, Ballycolman, Dunnamanagh, East, North, Slievekirk South and West, are therefore excluded from the revised Foyle constituency. The Commission considered whether the new constituency might take the name of the LGD but believed that this would not receive cross-community support. The Commission therefore propose that the existing name of Foyle be retained.

14. On the enumeration date the electorate of the existing East Londonderry constituency was more than 15% above the EQ. The Commission feel that the boundaries of the constituency

should be redrawn to reduce the size of the electorate. At present the constituency comprises Coleraine LGD, Limavady LGD and part of Magherafelt LGD. There are geographical and other reasons why Limavady LGD should remain wholly within the constituency. However it would not be possible to transfer the whole of Magherafelt LGD into the adjacent constituency of Mid Ulster without reducing the electorate of the constituency of East Londonderry to 57,023 which would be almost 16% below the EQ. The course therefore adopted by the Commission has been to redefine the present constituency boundary within Magherafelt LGD. It was decided that for the constituency boundary to correspond to that between Moyola and Magherafelt Town DEAs would result in an unusually shaped constituency. Instead it is recommended that six wards of Magherafelt LGD (Bellaghy, Gulladuff, Maghera, Swatragh, Valley and Upperlands) should remain in East Londonderry, while the remainder of the LGD (including the present split wards of Lower Glenshane, Tobermore, Town Parks East and Town Parks West) be transferred into the proposed constituency of Mid Ulster. The decision to divide Moyola DEA establishes a constituency boundary which extends across Sperrin DEA, roughly along the line of the A6 main road. The proposed **East Londonderry** county constituency would have an electorate of 66,888 (1.4% below the EQ).

Mid Ulster and Fermanagh and South Tyrone County Constituencies

15. The recommendations already described entail the transfer into the proposed constituency of Mid Ulster of seven whole or part wards from the constituency of East Londonderry and eight whole or part wards from Foyle constituency. To keep the electorate of the proposed constituency of **Mid Ulster** within an acceptable margin of the EQ, the Commission have had no alternative but to propose that wards in the south of the constituency should be transferred to the adjacent constituency of Fermanagh and South Tyrone. To bring the electorate of the proposed county constituency of **Mid Ulster** to 69,243 (2.1% above the EQ), it is recommended that the two whole DEAs of West Tyrone and Omagh Town be transferred to the proposed constituency of Fermanagh and South Tyrone, together with the ward of Killyclogher (which the Commission regard as an integral part of Omagh town) and the wards of Beragh and Sixmilecross (which the Commission are satisfied look to Omagh). To transfer the whole or part of the Derg DEA (in Strabane LGD) to the Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency (but leave the Omagh Town DEA in Mid Ulster) would divide Strabane LGD as well as Omagh LGD between constituencies, a situation which it is felt would be even less desirable and one to be avoided.

16. In view of these changes and to keep the electorate of the proposed constituency of **Fermanagh and South Tyrone** to an acceptable size, it is recommended that most of the Dungannon LGD should be removed from that constituency. The Commission consider that the Augher, Clogher and Fivemiletown wards of Dungannon LGD form a distinct geographical unit based on the Clogher Valley, separate from the remainder of Dungannon LGD and looking towards Enniskillen. It is recommended therefore that these three wards should be retained within the proposed constituency of Fermanagh and South Tyrone (giving it a more logical shape and reasonable size in terms of electorate), and that the remainder of Dungannon LGD should be included in a new constituency. The Commission consider that such a division of the Dungannon LGD is preferable to division along DEA boundaries. For the whole of the Clogher Valley DEA to be included in the proposed constituency of Fermanagh and South Tyrone would *inter alia* separate the electorates of the wards of Ballygawley and Castlecaulfield from the town of Dungannon to which they look. The electorate of the proposed county constituency of Fermanagh and South Tyrone would be 69,449 (2.4% above the EQ).

Blackwater County Constituency

17. It is proposed that Dungannon LGD (but not the wards of Augher, Clogher and Fivemiletown) should be joined with the whole of Armagh LGD in a new county constituency,

thereby minimising further disruption to LGDs. It is suggested that the new constituency should take its name from the River Blackwater, upon which it is centred but other names associating Armagh with Dungannon or Tyrone may command more local support. The alternative of joining Dungannon LGD (but not the wards of Augher, Clogher and Fivemiletown) and Craigavon LGD would create an unnaturally shaped constituency which would be practically 23% above the EQ. To remedy this and to give shape to and facilitate links between the two parts of the constituency would require dividing Craigavon LGD between constituencies and would probably require including in the constituency parts of Armagh LGD, thereby also disturbing the integrity of that LGD. The proposed **Blackwater** county constituency would have an electorate of 65,146 (4% below the EQ).

Newry and Mourne, Upper Bann and Lagan Valley County Constituencies

18. The present scheme of constituencies in County Down, which includes an electorate in the constituency of South Down 15.8% above the EQ, is considered unacceptable. Also, the present boundaries of the Newry and Armagh and the South Down constituencies split a number of wards and divide the Newry and Mourne LGD, thereby effectively separating the town of Newry from its eastern hinterland. As, on the enumeration date, the electorate of Newry and Mourne LGD was 57,371, this LGD would not normally be considered a constituency in its own right (it would be more than 15% below the EQ) but it could serve as the nucleus of a new constituency. To augment the electorate of this new constituency, it is therefore proposed to include in it Newcastle and its environs, which may be considered to be an integral part of the Mourne region and has some historical links with Newry. The proposed county constituency of **Newry and Mourne** therefore includes the Donard, Murlough, Shimna and Tollymore wards of Down LGD. It is recommended that this division of Down LGD although undesirable in principle is preferable to division along the boundary of the Newcastle DEA (which would almost bisect the proposed neighbouring Mid Down constituency); and results in a more equitable distribution of the electorate between the two adjacent constituencies. It was decided to respect the recommendation of the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner, accepted by the Secretary of State, that the ward of Rathfriland (now in Banbridge LGD) does not look to Newry town, and therefore it has been excluded from the proposed constituency of Newry and Mourne. To do otherwise would be to divide Banbridge LGD between three constituencies. The proposed Newry and Mourne constituency would have an electorate of 64,245 (5.3% below the EQ).

19. The present constituency of **Upper Bann** includes the whole of Craigavon LGD, Banbridge Town DEA and the surrounding Banbridge LGD wards of Gilford, Lawrencetown and Loughbrickland. The extended shape of the constituency was noted by the Commission. It was considered that the Banbridge LGD ward of Loughbrickland could be transferred from the constituency into the proposed constituency of Mid Down, thereby achieving a more even distribution of electorate between the two constituencies. This ward lies in the Knockiveagh DEA which is already divided between the two constituencies. The transfer therefore entails no additional disruption to DEAs, whereas to transfer any adjacent ward would divide Banbridge Town DEA between constituencies. Otherwise the only changes recommended to the existing constituency are those necessary to accommodate the new boundaries of Quilly ward. The electorate of the proposed county constituency of Upper Bann would be 67,504 (0.5% below the EQ).

20. On the enumeration date the present constituency of **Lagan Valley** was 10.3% above the EQ, which the Commission consider should be reduced. The Commission consider that the electorate of the constituency can be readily reduced by excluding from it the Castlereagh LGD wards of Carryduff East, Carryduff West and the part wards of Cairnshill and Knockbracken. In keeping with the Commission's wish to avoid dividing LGDs between constituencies these changes also make the boundaries of Lagan Valley constituency coterminous with those of

Lisburn LGD and a constituency in its own right. The proposed county constituency of Lagan Valley would have an electorate of 70,668 (4.2% in excess of the EQ).

Mid Down, Castlereagh and Newtownards, and North Down County Constituencies

21. To replace the existing South Down constituency, a new county constituency of **Mid Down** is proposed. This proposed constituency would inherit those parts of Down LGD (though not the wards of Donard, Murlough, Shimna and Tollymore) and that part of Banbridge LGD now forming part of the constituency of South Down. In order to bring the constituency to an acceptable size, it is recommended that it should extend northwards to include the Ards LGD wards of Ballygowan, Comber East, Comber North, Comber West, Killinchy, Lisbane and Scrabo and as already mentioned, include the County Down Banbridge LGD ward of Loughbrickland. The Commission note that their Provisional Recommendation to include in the proposed constituency the ward of Scrabo divides the DEA of Newtownards with which local residents more readily identify. The proposed constituency of Mid Down would be predominantly rural in character and geographically smaller than the present South Down constituency. The electorate of the constituency would be 63,153 (6.9% below the EQ).

22. Castlereagh LGD is now divided between four constituencies which the Commission find unacceptable. The majority of the electorate of Castlereagh LGD are in the present constituency of Strangford but a large number also reside in the constituency of North Down and some in the constituencies of Belfast East and Lagan Valley. In keeping with avoiding LGDs being divided between constituencies wherever practicable the proposed county constituency of **Castlereagh and Newtownards** includes the whole of Castlereagh LGD; but to bring the constituency to an acceptable size it is proposed to include in it parts of Ards LGD (Ballyrainey, Bradshaw's Brae, Central, Glen, Gregstown, Movilla and Whitespots wards) which are connected by the main A20 road to Dundonald in Castlereagh LGD; and parts of North Down LGD (Cultra, Holywood Demesne, Holywood Priory and Loughview wards). By including in the constituency the four Holywood wards, the Commission noted that they would be dividing North Down LGD and Holywood DEA and might be underestimating the links which have developed between Holywood and the rest of North Down LGD, and especially Bangor. However without the addition of these wards, the proposed constituency of Castlereagh and Newtownards would be 63,734 (6.1% below the EQ). The character of the proposed constituency is predominantly suburban (it embraces the commuter towns of Carryduff, Dundonald, Holywood and Newtownards) and the electorate may have broadly similar social and economic concerns. The electorate of the proposed constituency of Castlereagh and Newtownards would be 72,210 (6.4% above the EQ).

23. The **North Down** county constituency would embrace North Down LGD (but not Cultra, Holywood Demesne, Holywood Priory and Loughview wards) and the Ards LGD wards of Donaghadee North, Donaghadee South, Loughries, Millisle and the whole of Ards Peninsula DEA on the enumeration date had an electorate of 66,137 (2.5% below the EQ). The Commission considered whether it was right to divide North Down LGD between constituencies, as already mentioned, and whether the Ards LGD ward of Loughries with its close proximity to Newtownards) should form part of the proposed constituency of Castlereagh and Newtownards. In both cases the Commission accorded greater weight to the need to equalise the electorates of the two constituencies, feeling that public opinion might not in the case of North Down support a proposed constituency 10% above the EQ.

24. It has only been possible to achieve the distribution of electorate between the proposed constituencies of Castlereagh and Newtownards, Mid Down and North Down by dividing Ards, Down and North Down LGDs between constituencies. The Commission have been faced by a

number of constraints involving the distribution of the electorate and geographical considerations affecting Strangford Lough and the Ards Peninsula.

CONCLUSION

Electoral Quota

25. The Provisional Recommendations contain proposals for 17 constituencies, the electorate of each falling within a range of 7% either side of the EQ. During the last review the Commission adopted an objective of all constituencies being within a tolerance of 10% (above or below) the quota, and Final Recommendations made in 1982 proposed constituencies within this range.

Local Government Districts and District Electoral Areas

26. The recommendations include proposals to divide Belfast and eight other LGDs (Ards, Banbridge, Down, Dungannon, Magherafelt, Newtownabbey, North Down, Omagh). In the case of Belfast, the outer boundaries of the Belfast borough constituencies coincide exactly with the Belfast LGD boundary. The Commission believe that their Provisional Recommendations offer the minimum disruption to the framework of local government consistent with other constraints.

27. The recommendations also divide 11 DEAs (Ards East, Clogher Valley, Holywood, Knockiveagh, Laganbank, Mid Tyrone, Moyola, Newcastle, Newtownards, Sperrin, University). The Commission believe that the number of split DEAs has been kept to a minimum consistent with meeting their statutory obligations and policies adopted at the last Review. Overall the Commission believe that confusion among the electorate will be reduced by the changes recommended.

28. The Commission are satisfied that on the information available to them and that, given the distribution of the Parliamentary electorate, their Provisional Recommendations ensure a high degree of equality between constituency electorates, with the least practicable disturbance to existing boundaries, and respect for local government boundaries.

Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland

31 March 1994

APPENDIX E

This Appendix comprises the Reports of five assistant Commissioners who conducted public Local Inquiries during May and June 1994.

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ANNEX I

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

REPORT OF A LOCAL INQUIRY HELD IN RESPECT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES OF BELFAST EAST, BELFAST NORTH, BELFAST SOUTH AND BELFAST WEST, ON 4 AND 5 MAY 1994 AT CITY HALL, BELFAST

I have the honour to report to you as follows:

1. The Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland announced a Review of parliamentary constituency boundaries on 19 March 1993 and published Provisional Recommendations for revised boundaries on 27 January 1994. On 8 March 1994, I was appointed an assistant Commissioner by the Secretary of State under section 2 of and Schedule 1 to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 and was subsequently invited by the Commission to conduct a public Local Inquiry into the Commission's proposals affecting the borough constituencies of Belfast East, Belfast North, Belfast South and Belfast West.

2. On 19 March 1993, the enumeration date for the present Review, the total number of parliamentary electors in Northern Ireland was 1,153,477, and the number of constituencies in Northern Ireland was 17. The electoral quota (EQ) or average number of electors for each constituency was therefore 67,852. The Commission are obliged by the statutory Rules for Redistribution of Seats which form Schedule 2 to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 to recommend constituency electorates as near as is practicable to the EQ. On the enumeration date the electorates of the four Belfast borough constituencies were as follows:

Parliamentary Constituency	**Parliamentary Electorate**	**Percentage Deviation from the EQ (67,852)**
Belfast East	53,226	- 21.6%
Belfast North	55,169	- 18.7%
Belfast South	52,326	- 22.9%
Belfast West	55,416	- 18.3%

It is therefore the case that all of the Belfast borough constituencies are substantially below the EQ.

3. The Commission are also statutorily obliged, as far as is practicable, to avoid dividing local government wards between constituencies, unless it appears to them that a departure is desirable to avoid an excessive disparity between the electorates of constituencies and the EQ, or between the electorate of any constituency and that of neighbouring constituencies. The current boundaries of the Belfast borough constituencies divide 11 local government wards, namely Ballymacarrett, Belmont, Crumlin, Duncairn, New Lodge, Orangefield, Shaftesbury, Shankill, The Mount, Woodstock and Woodvale, all of which lie within Belfast local government district

(LGD). The boundaries also divide the Antrim LGD ward of Clady between the constituencies of Belfast North, Belfast West and South Antrim.

4. The Commission are also statutorily obliged to take account, as far as they reasonably can, of inconveniences attendant upon alterations of constituency boundaries, other than alterations to preserve the integrity of local government wards; and also to take account of local ties which may be broken by such changes. The Commission acknowledge that 'local ties' may be of 'an economic, geographical or social' nature; but they also consider that they might include ties between wards belonging to the same LGD. The outer boundaries of the four Belfast borough constituencies largely coincide with the Belfast City Council boundary. There is only one substantial variation[1] where the Belfast South constituency includes four wards of Castlereagh LGD, namely Cregagh, Downshire, Lisnasharragh and Wynchurch. The Belfast borough constituencies therefore include the whole of Belfast LGD and these four Castlereagh LGD wards, and such is the area covered by the Local Inquiry.

5. The Commission also recognise that 'local ties' may include ties between wards belonging to the same district electoral area (DEA). There are nine DEAs in the Belfast LGD. Five of these are to a greater or lesser extent divided between existing constituencies, namely: Castle, Court, Laganbank, Oldpark and Pottinger. In addition, the outer boundary of the Belfast South constituency divides the Castlereagh Central DEA between constituencies.

STATEMENT OF REASONS

6. In the Statement of Reasons for Provisional Recommendations issued by the Commission on 31 March 1994, the Commission laid down the principles which had guided their Provisional Recommendations and, in relation to the area covered by the Local Inquiry, stated that:

> 'The electorates of the existing Belfast borough constituencies have diminished considerably since the last review, leaving the Commission with a logical choice, either to extend the boundaries of existing constituencies into adjacent LGDs to bring the Belfast constituency electorates closer to the EQ; or to reduce the number of constituencies in Belfast to three. After careful consideration the Commission have chosen the latter for four main reasons:
>
> a) Extension of the existing Belfast borough constituencies in an even, radial fashion into neighbouring LGDs would create a ripple effect, resulting in unacceptable and uneven variations in the size of electorates of other constituencies in Northern Ireland;
>
> b) By contrast, division of Belfast LGD into three constituencies would allow the outer boundaries of the Belfast constituencies to conform exactly to the LGD boundary, and to the boundaries of area public services. It would also permit close adherence to the pattern of DEAs in Belfast (with only one DEA divided by a constituency boundary) and an even distribution of the number of wards among the three constituencies, each constituency containing 17 wards;
>
> c) The DEAs of Castle, Court and Oldpark on the one hand and Lower Falls and Upper Falls on the other are separated by physical boundaries, the 'peace lines', sealing off areas in the west of the city. The boundary between the constituencies of Belfast

1 Minor variations between the outer boundaries of the Belfast borough parliamentary constituencies and the city boundary are as follows: Belfast North includes a part of Clady ward in Antrim LGD (196 electors) and a small part of Collinbridge ward in Newtownabbey LGD (six electors); Belfast West also includes a small part of Clady ward in Antrim LGD (no electors involved); Belfast East constituency includes a small part of Loughview ward in North Down LGD (13 electors); and a small part of the Belfast LGD ward of Belmont (98 electors) is included in the present constituency of North Down. *Register of Parliamentary Electors in Northern Ireland, 19 March 1993.*

North and Belfast West would therefore not only recognise DEA boundaries but also separate the distinct communities which exist. The Commission consider that not to acknowledge this division would ignore the realities of daily life; and

d) Careful consideration was given to historic boundaries, to lines of communication such as major roads (including motorways) and railway lines, and to the River Lagan as lines of demarcation; but it was decided that none of these represented an insurmountable barrier to communication and that it was acceptable for constituencies to span these boundaries, roads, railways and the river where other considerations compelled this.

'The proposed three Belfast borough constituencies are: **Belfast East**, with an electorate of 70,406 (3.8% above the EQ); **Belfast North**, with an electorate of 68,065 (0.3% above the EQ) and **Belfast West**, with an electorate of 70,155 (3.4% above the EQ). All three constituencies are above the EQ. The Commission note that in every year since the last review was completed, the electorates of the present Belfast borough constituencies have declined and have continued to do so since the Commission announced their Review. In deciding names to recommend for revised constituencies the Commission have an open mind and will accept suitable alternatives which command substantial local support.'

7. The Commission recommended that each of the three proposed constituencies should return five members to any future Northern Ireland Assembly.

REPRESENTATIONS

8. Following publication of the Provisional Recommendations there was a period of one month during which representations relating to the proposals could be submitted. The Commission received submissions from:

Cllr Tom Hartley, Party Chairperson, **Sinn Fein**
Mr Leonard Fee, Chairman, **The Conservative Party Northern Ireland Area Council**
Mr Peter Robinson MP (Belfast East), Deputy Leader, **Ulster Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)**
Mr Jim Wilson, Secretary, **Ulster Unionist Council**
Social Democratic & Labour Party (SDLP)
Mr David Ford, General Secretary, **Alliance Party of Northern Ireland (Alliance)**
Mr Jim White, Town Clerk and Chief Executive, **Castlereagh Borough Council**
Ms Siohban O'Halleran, **Sinn Fein**
Ms Gerry Cosgrove, Party Administrator, **SDLP**
Alderman Wallace Browne, Chairman, **East Belfast DUP**
Mr Alan Houston, Belfast
Cllr Stephen McBride, Belfast
Mr Peter Prendiville, Chairman, **East Belfast SDLP**
Dr Alasdair McDonnell, Constituency Representative, **South Belfast SDLP**
Dr Joe Hendron MP (Belfast West)
Ms Elizabeth A Blane, Belfast
Mr Hugh R Brown JP, Belfast
Mr Jeffrey Dudgeon, Chairman, **South Belfast Constituency Labour Party**
Mr Joseph G O'Hanlon, Bangor
Miss R I Flack, Belfast
Mr Robert Ratcliffe, Belfast
Mr John David Bustard, Holywood
Mr Esmond Birnie, Vice Chairman, **South Belfast Conservative Association**

I had careful regard to these representations and to those others (for example those submitted by Down and later by Newry and Mourne District Councils and by the South Down SDLP constituency organisation) which made reference to Belfast.

9. In addition, representations objecting to the Provisional Recommendations were received from bodies of electors numbering one hundred or more in the constituencies of Belfast East, Belfast South and Belfast West. The Commission were therefore obliged to hold a Local Inquiry in respect of those three constituencies (but not the Belfast North constituency), in accordance with section 6 of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986. The Inquiry was announced on 31 March 1994. The main political parties, Members of Parliament, district councils and all those who had submitted representations were informed of the Inquiry, and notice of the Inquiry was published on 31 March 1994.

10. The Inquiry commenced on Wednesday 4 May 1994 at 10.30 am and concluded the following day at lunchtime. It was well attended.

11. During the course of the Inquiry written representations were submitted to me from:

Mr James McCabe, **Colin Conservation Society**
Mr James Neeson, Manager, **West Belfast Taxis**
Divis Joint Development Committee
Mr D P Simpson, **The Lynx Project**
Ms Carol Moore, Ms Elizabeth Groves, Ms Briege O'Neill and Mr Daniel Groves, **Upper Andersonstown Community Groups**
T Enright, Chairperson, **Black Mountain Environmental Group**
Mr Ciaran de Baroid, Community Worker, **Upper Springfield Road Resource Centre**
Ms Paula McCapen, **Twinbrook Tenants and Community Association**
Ms Josie Ferris and Ms Nuala McConnell, **Clonard Parent and Youth Group**
Mr Michael Doherty, Chairperson, **Glen Parent Community Youth Group**
P Taggart and Ms Marie Perkins, **Upper Donegall Road Social & Recreational Committee**
Ms Agnes Burns and Desi Dunne, **Glenbawn Concerned Parents**
Ms Elish McCashin and Ms Terri Woods, **Westrock Parent Youth Group**
Mr Sean McMahon, chairperson, **Horn Drive Drop-In**
Ms Marie Osborne, Centre Manager, **West Belfast Youth Support Group**
Ms Sally McErlean, Chairperson, **Divis Drop-In Centre**
Ms Sheila O'Hara, and Ms Kate Tibodeau, **Gort na Mona Parent & Youth Group**
Ms Eileen Howell, **Falls Community Council**
Mr John Bustard, Holywood
Sinn Fein: Proposal to Belfast Public Inquiry
Ms Whilma Donnelly, Chairperson, **Feis Ghleann an Lagain**
Ms Deirdre McManus, **Feile an Phobail**
South Belfast Constituency Labour Party:
Extending the Electoral Boundaries of Belfast; The Radial Approach Preliminary Legal Submissions on the Report of the Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland.

12. At the Inquiry, oral submissions were made by the following declared members of political parties:

Mr Robinson	DUP
Mr Hunter	Official Unionist Party
Mr Birnie	Conservative Party
Ms McGuinness, Mr Curran, Mr Molloy and Ms O'Halleran	Sinn Fein

Dr McDonnell and Cllr Attwood	SDLP
Mr Whyte and Cllr McBride	Alliance Party
Mr Cobain	South Belfast Constituency Labour Party

and by other speakers as follows:

Ms Groves, Upper Andersonstown Community Group
Mr McConville, West Belfast Parent Youth Support Group
Mr Power, Falls Community Council

13. I permitted cross-examination of those witnesses willing to answer questions from the floor and put questions of my own to those giving evidence. I was satisfied that everyone attending the Inquiry and who was anxious to express their views had the opportunity to do so.

14. The written representations which were received included the ones which are summarised below and which are of particular relevance to the constituencies covered by this Inquiry.

(a) A submission from the DUP that there should be 18 constituencies instead of the existing 17, that the proposal to reduce the number of seats in Belfast to three was unsatisfactory, that there should be four seats for Belfast by allowing the constituencies to "breathe out towards the suburbs". On the assumption that the Commission would seek only to modify the 17 constituencies drawn up in the Provisional Recommendations the DUP proposed moving the Stranmillis ward from the new Belfast East to the new Belfast West constituency in exchange for the Shaftesbury ward.

(b) The Ulster Unionist Council expressed support for the proposals on the basis that "in difficult circumstances the Commission has come up with what is in essence a fair solution based on the current demographic position". It did have views however on the names which should be given to the new constituencies.

(c) Alliance accepted the Provisional Recommendation that there should be three seats in Belfast and also agreed with the proposed boundaries. It also had views about the names which should be given to them.

(d) The SDLP expressed opposition to the overall plan for Northern Ireland but in respect of Belfast simply asked for an Inquiry.

(e) Sinn Fein expressed opposition to the Provisional Recommendations, except in so far as they related to the proposed new constituency of Belfast North and advanced an alternative proposal for revising the constituency boundaries in Northern Ireland in general with six in the greater Belfast area. Apart from Belfast North its proposals were for constituencies with boundaries which were significantly different to those set out in the Provisional Recommendations.

(f) The Conservative Party opposed the Provisional Recommendations and advocated revised boundaries which would basically maintain four seats for Belfast by extending the existing seats.

(g) South Belfast Constituency Labour Party advocated the retention of the four seats by extending boundaries beyond the local government district boundary but also wanted 18 seats overall, rejecting the Commission's arguments that there should be 17.

(h) There were various representations from individuals on the definition of the boundaries, the number of seats for Belfast and the names to be given to the constituencies.

OTHER ISSUES

15. Before summarising the evidence and my views on it I want to identify a number of other issues which were raised and which need to be addressed separately:

(a) this report must be read in the overall context which is that my role is much more restricted than that of the Commission. I am only tasked to report in relation to the Belfast area. The Commission have to devise a plan for all of Northern Ireland. It may be that the knock-on or ripple effect of accepting my proposals would be such that in the view of the Commission they could not reasonably be accommodated. In view of the extensive changes which the Provisional Recommendations would have if they were ultimately implemented it is impossible for me to try to marry my proposals with those recommendations or with any alternative overall approach. To do that, I would have to advance a plan for all seats which is far beyond my brief. That issue will have to be resolved by the Commission in light not only of my report but also the reports of the other assistant Commissioners who have conducted Inquiries in other areas. I have not consulted with them or tried to prepare a report which will fit in with their views, which I am not aware of;

(b) 17 or 18 seats? Many parties believe that Northern Ireland's representation at Westminster is inadequate and that the Commission should have sought to increase the present number of 17 MPs to the maximum permissible which is 18. The Provisional Recommendation of the Commission is that the current number should remain unchanged. They also indicate that they have received advice from Senior Crown Counsel to the effect that they should only increase the number to 18 if that would reduce or alleviate difficulties experienced in applying the Rules for Redistribution of Seats on the basis of 17 constituencies. It should be clear that my limited function is to report on how and where I believe the Belfast boundaries should be drawn. It is therefore a matter for the Commission to decide whether they agree with my views and, if they do, whether they should accommodate those views within 17 or 18 seats. I do not regard it as part of my task to advise on what the total number of seats in Northern Ireland should be. I made this clear at the start of the Inquiry and I stated that if anybody wanted to put forward views about whether there should be 17 or 18 seats I would listen to them in the framework of how that affected the proposals for Belfast; and

(c) Parts of the submissions, notably from Alliance and SDLP, touched on the perceived inadequacies of the current voting system and the advantages of having some form of proportional representation. As those involved were aware, that interesting issue is not within my remit at all.

NUMBER OF CONSTITUENCIES

16. A number of themes or issues emerged from the written submission and at the Inquiry itself. Of these the fundamental one was how many seats Belfast should have. It currently has four seats, each of which is significantly under the EQ of 67,852. There was widespread agreement that this problem can only be solved in one of two ways. The first is to reduce the number of seats from four to three and confine the overall area to the LGD of Belfast. In the alternative, the boundaries should be extended into adjacent LGDs and thereby encompass sufficient additional electors to bring each of the four seats up to the EQ. (It should be noted that if there were 18 seats instead of 17 the EQ would be 64,082, a figure which is still substantially in excess of the electorate for each of the current seats.) I now summarise the representations in the order in which they were made at the Inquiry on this fundamental issue.

17. The Conservative Party proposed four seats for Belfast instead of three. It did not accept the four main reasons advanced by the Commission in their Provisional Recommendations for reducing the number of seats. Instead it presented a plan showing how Northern Ireland could be divided into 17 seats without unacceptable variations. The Conservatives rejected the adherence to the LGD of Belfast, in particular because it took the view that because of the process of suburbanisation this course was the most inappropriate one to adopt. The Conservatives were also unhappy with the acceptance of the peace line as a constituency boundary. They then stressed that in view of the continual decline in the population of Belfast every year since 1982, the proposal to reduce the number of seats from four to three would simply store up trouble because in five to ten years time, if the trend continued, the boundary would have to be breached to keep three seats up to the EQ.

18. Sinn Fein's proposals did not deal directly with the issue of three seats or four. They wanted six seats in Greater Belfast which would include areas covered by at least two other Inquiries, namely those in the areas of Antrim and North Down. While accepting the Provisional Recommendation for North Belfast, they proposed extending the Belfast West constituency to include the Twinbrook/Poleglass area and also to include the area between the Ml motorway and the Lisburn Road from Shaftesbury to Finaghy. The Belfast East constituency would then be increased by giving it large parts of the existing Belfast South constituency including the area between the Lisburn and Malone Roads. These proposed boundaries related in part at least to changes which Sinn Fein wanted to make to local government boundaries.

19. The SDLP agreed with the proposal for three seats, subject to exchanging Shaftesbury for Stranmillis wards and subject also to a secondary point that the Botanic ward be split. It accepted the reasoning set out by the Commission in their Provisional Recommendations and in particular expressed the view that any other proposal would be inconvenient, both within Belfast and beyond. This party believed that the ties between Belfast and adjacent areas were not sufficiently strong to warrant a departure from the Provisional Recommendations.

20. The DUP, in its oral submission, which was presented by Mr Peter Robinson MP expressed 18 seats as its preferred option. He then indicated that even within 17 seats he would welcome four being retained for Belfast. So far as the East Belfast seat was concerned, Mr Robinson suggested bringing it up to quota by extending it towards Castlereagh, ie., the Braniel, Gilnahirk, Tullycarnet and Hillfoot wards. The South Belfast seat would then be extended towards an area which might generally be described as Castlereagh South, ie., Minnowburn, Beechill, Newtownbreda, Galwally, Knockbracken and Cairnshill. The West Belfast seat would be extended to include Twinbrook, Poleglass, Kilwee and Collin Glen wards. To bring the North Belfast seat up to quota Mr Robinson suggested an extension into the Newtownabbey area, ie., the Valley, Whitehouse, Dunanney, Coole and Abbey wards.

21. The Ulster Unionist Council had a similar approach to that of the SDLP. While it had wanted 18 seats originally, it was prepared to accept that if there were to be 17 seats the Provisional Recommendations were fair and reasonable. In its view it was relevant that the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner had decided not to extend local government boundaries for the City of Belfast. It was also attracted to the fact that there would be 17 wards in each of the three proposed constituencies.

22. Alliance indicated that it had originally favoured four seats for Belfast but that on a study of the various possibilities it was moved to agree with the Provisional Recommendations for three seats only on the pragmatic grounds that it was extremely difficult to find any other natural formulation. At the same time it recognised that "the local government area line does not really reflect any overriding reality in the community" and it "does not really reflect the true boundaries of Belfast". The party was unhappy with the adoption of the peace line *per se* as a boundary but recognised that the same effect was achieved by simply moving the whole district electoral area

of Court into North Belfast. Alliance did add that if 18 seats were provided instead of 17 it would become much easier to keep four for Belfast and it would be in favour of that if there were 18 seats.

23. The South Belfast constituency Labour Party opposed the Provisional Recommendations. It wanted 18 seats, it rejected the limited tolerance on the EQ of 7% and it took the view that Belfast ought to be divided radially from the centre out to the suburbs so that each seat included inner city areas as well as suburbs. On that basis it then put forward suggestions about how the various seats could be drawn though its spokesman made it clear that he was not trying to stand over every single ward but was indicating a reasonable alternative approach to that adopted by the Commission.

24. I realise that before the Commission published their Provisional Recommendations for three seats in Belfast they must have studied in detail the possibility of extending the existing four seats so as to bring them up towards the EQ. Indeed from the submissions at the Inquiry it is clear that some of those who now agree with the recommendations originally wanted four themselves eg., the Alliance Party. Some believe that it is easier to accommodate four seats by increasing the overall number of constituencies to 18. Having considered the Provisional Recommendations, the Statement of Reasons which accompanied them, the written submissions and the oral evidence my strong view is that the number of seats in Belfast should remain at four. I am influenced in particular by the following points:

A. I do not see any significant attraction or overriding need or justification for basing the number of seats on the LGD of Belfast, especially since this boundary is not itself recognised by the existing constituencies in so far as Belfast East includes some wards from Castlereagh Borough Council;

B. I agree with and accept the arguments advanced by the Conservative Party that in light of the process of suburbanisation the Belfast LGD is the one which it might be least appropriate to follow;

C. It is clear that many people who formerly lived within Belfast have moved out over the years to its suburbs. On the evidence it seems likely that many of them still work in Belfast and look to it as "theirs" notwithstanding the fact that they have moved out to estates or developments designed to cater for Belfast people eg. Twinbrook, Poleglass, Gilnahirk;

D. In view of the decline in the population every year since 1982, I believe that confining Belfast to three seats because that number sits easily with the **current** population and the current EQ is a dangerous step;

E. I agree with and accept the views expressed by the Alliance representative that the local government boundary of Belfast does not really reflect any overriding reality in the Community nor does it reflect the true boundaries of Belfast;

F. Revisions of boundaries are necessary whether there be three seats or four. In either case some criticism can be made legitimately of the way in which areas with no real connection with each other are put in the same constituency. I do not see why the criticisms of a four seat Belfast would be any more legitimate or valid than those of a three seat Belfast;

G. The fact that the Belfast LGD was not altered recently despite submissions by various parties that it should be does not fetter or restrict in any meaningful way the discretion to alter the Parliamentary constituency boundaries;

H. It is perfectly feasible to define four constituencies within an acceptable tolerance of the EQ without splitting any wards and while still taking account so far as possible of local ties. Indeed it is arguable that less damage might be done to local ties by having four seats than three; and

I. I believe that the identity of each of the existing four seats is sufficiently strong for those seats to be maintained if it is at all possible to do so. In particular it seems perfectly clear to me that most of South Belfast does not fit in with either West or East Belfast.

COMPOSITION OF CONSTITUENCIES

25. I now turn to make proposals in relation to the definition of the four Belfast seats. The proposals which are set out below are based on an EQ of 67,852 which is appropriate if there are to be 17 seats. If however there are to be 18 seats a slightly different approach would have to be taken to acknowledge the reduced average constituency electorate of 64,082. My basic approach is to maintain the existing boundary lines between each of the four seats and then to extend each towards the suburbs. In some instances a perfectly respectable argument can be made for extending the seat in a slightly different direction. For example should the Belfast East seat be extended to include Dundonald or Lower Braniel? As most of those who made submissions acknowledged, there is no simple right or wrong answer to these questions. The aim is simply to bring a proposed constituency up towards the EQ without damaging or breaking local ties in so far as it is possible to do so.

26. **Belfast East** - I propose that this constituency be made up of the following wards:

Sydenham
Ballymacarrett
Cregagh
Downshire
Orangefield
Knock
Ballyhackamore
Stormont
Lower Braniel
Tullycarnet
Island
The Mount
Wynchurch
Lisnasharragh
Bloomfield
Cherryvalley
Belmont
Upper Braniel
Gilnahirk
Hillfoot

This constituency would then have an electorate of 63,881 which is within an acceptable tolerance of the EQ of 67,852 if it is based on 17 seats or 64,082 if it is based on 18 seats.

27. **Belfast South** - I propose that this constituency be made up of the following wards:

Shaftesbury
Musgrave
Upper Malone
Windsor
Stranmillis
Ballynafeigh
Woodstock
Newtownbreda
Beechill
Cairnshill
Blackstaff
Finaghy
Malone
Botanic
Rosetta
Ravenhill
Galwally
Minnowburn
Knockbracken

This constituency would then have an electorate of 64,491 which is within an acceptable tolerance of the EQ of 67,852 if it is based on 17 seats or 64,082 if it is based on 18 seats.

28. **Belfast West** - I propose this constituency be made up of the following wards:

Falls	Clonard
Beechmount	Whiterock
Falls Park	Upper Springfield
Glencolin	Glen Road
Andersonstown	Ladybrook
Shankill	Highfield
Glencairn	Collin Glen
Poleglass	Kilwee
Twinbrook	

This constituency would then have an electorate of 62,940 which is within an acceptable tolerance of the EQ of 67,852 if it is based on 17 seats or 64,082 if it is based on 18 seats.

29. **Belfast North** - I propose this constituency be made up of the following wards:

New Lodge	Crumlin
Woodvale	Ardoyne
Legoniel	Ballysillan
Cliftonville	Water Works
Duncairn	Fortwilliam
Chichester Park	Cavehill
Castle View	Bellevue
Valley	Dunanney
Whitehouse	Abbey
Coole	

This constituency would then have an electorate of 67,989 which is almost exactly the EQ based on 17 seats and would be within an acceptable tolerance of an EQ of 64,082 based on 18 seats.

30. In each case I am satisfied that there are sufficient local ties between the existing constituency and the area into which it is to be extended to justify the connection which I have made. I also make the following points to help explain the basis on which the proposed boundaries have been drawn up:

A. While it might be preferable for DEAs to be kept within the same constituencies as far as possible, I do not see this as a significant factor. At paragraph 5 of this report I have already referred to five DEAs which are divided between existing constituencies. No strong submission was made which suggested that the existing split in DEAs has caused significant problems or that splits in the future might do so;

B. Of all the issues raised at the Inquiry the one for which support was strongest on all sides was the connection between the Twinbrook/Poleglass area and West Belfast. Submissions from local groups as well as political parties demonstrated clearly the strength of opinion on this issue. While I have some reservations about the fact that some of these submissions were clearly co-ordinated, it is patently obvious that many of the people who live beyond the existing constituency boundary have strong ties with West Belfast;

C. The proposals outlined above are not exactly in line with those advanced by any particular party but they follow the same principle as that which was advanced by the DUP, the Conservatives and South Belfast Constituency Labour Parties. Neither the

SDLP nor the Ulster Unionist Council made any submissions about how four seats might be made up. Alliance did make such a submission though it has to be read carefully in the context that it is secondary to the primary argument that the Provisional Recommendations should be followed. Sinn Fein took a different approach which I have already outlined above. Those who outlined their models for four constituencies accepted that they could equally be drawn in slightly different ways without any fundamental difficulty arising. I respectfully adopt the same attitude. I do not say that if there are to be four seats the boundaries could not possibly be drawn in any other than that outlined above; and

D. There was some criticism of the Commission for their decision that in order to promote electoral equality they should aim at constituency electorates within a tolerance of 7% above or below the EQ. Some representatives seemed to interpret that as meaning that the Commission had adopted 7% as being an absolute bar. My understanding of the principle which is set out in the Statement of Reasons is that in order to achieve something close to uniformity it would prefer electorates to be within a reasonable tolerance of the quota. I assume however that the Commission would be prepared to breach that figure, but not by much, if they felt it necessary to do so. If this interpretation of the Statement of Reasons is correct then I respectfully agree with the Commission's approach.

31. If the proposals referred to above are accepted I do not see any need to change the existing names of the constituencies.

PROVISIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

32. I recognise that the proposals outlined above may not be accepted by the Boundary Commission. This may be because they still prefer their Provisional Recommendations or because it is not possible to tie these proposals into the overall picture. In case my proposals are rejected for either of these reasons or indeed for any other reason I now turn to deal with the submissions which were made on the assumption that the Provisional Recommendations would stand and that there would be three seats for Belfast.

33. So far as the boundaries are concerned the primary area of dispute was whether Stranmillis ward should stay in the East Belfast or move to the West Belfast seat in exchange for Shaftesbury ward. Both the DUP and the SDLP wanted this exchange to be made. They were opposed by the Ulster Unionist Council and by Alliance. The SDLP view was that the ties between Stranmillis and the new West Belfast seat were much stronger than those between it and the new East Belfast seat. Dr McDonnell for the SDLP gave evidence that in so far as generalisations can be made Shaftesbury's affinity was more with Botanic, Ballynafeigh and Rosetta wards than with West Belfast. He did not suggest that there were strong ties between Stranmillis and the new West Belfast seat but said that there were certainly ties between it and the Balmoral DEA which was going into the West Belfast seat. Mr Robinson, on behalf of the DUP, took a similar line while accepting that in any event "neither of them would be ideally fixed". On the other side Mr Hunter for the Ulster Unionist Council and Cllr McBride of Alliance advocated the approach set out in the Provisional Recommendations. Mr Hunter's view was that there were clear local ties between Shaftesbury ward on the one hand and Blackstaff and Windsor wards on the other. As against that he suggested that the ties of the Stranmillis community would be at least as much with those across the bridges over the River Lagan in Rosetta and Ballynafeigh wards. Cllr McBride for Alliance suggested that the way in which the boundaries were drawn made it significantly easier to put Shaftesbury ward into the West Belfast seat, especially since separating Stranmillis from Botanic wards was a wholly unnatural division.

34. As with many of the previous arguments there is no simple right or wrong on this issue. On balance my view is that the Provisional Recommendations of the Commission should stand and that Shaftesbury ward should stay in the new West Belfast seat with Stranmillis ward going into the new East Belfast seat. I am satisfied that Shaftesbury's ties with Windsor and Blackstaff wards are sufficient for it not to be a "sore thumb" in the new West Belfast seat. I am also satisfied that Stranmillis is hard to separate from Botanic ward and that if there are only to be three seats it should go to the east.

35. The SDLP raised as a minor issue the possibility of dividing the Botanic ward so that part of it should go with Stranmillis into the East Belfast seat. This part would be the south west corner, bounded by the river, Botanic Gardens and Elmwood Avenue. The area to the south and west of this line would in effect become part of Stranmillis. No other party supported this proposal. On its own that would not be fatal but since the Rules require that "so far as practicable ... no ward shall be included partly in one constituency and partly in another" there would need to be a special reason for splitting Botanic ward. For the following reasons I do not recommend that this should be done:

A. The argument is subsidiary to the main one about putting Stranmillis into the West Belfast seat. Since I have already rejected that, the issue becomes hypothetical; and

B. Even if the Commission accepts that Stranmillis and Shaftesbury wards should be exchanged, I do not believe that it is not practicable to maintain the entity of the Botanic ward.

36. The remaining issue is what names should be given to the three Belfast constituencies if the Provisional Recommendations are ultimately adopted by the Commission. They are currently designated as Belfast East, Belfast North and Belfast West but the Statement of Reasons for the Provisional Recommendations includes the following:

> "In deciding names to recommend for revised constituencies the Commission have an open mind and will accept suitable alternatives which command substantial local support."

Most of those who made submissions at the Inquiry had views on this. The Conservative Party suggested that the proposed names were inappropriate and should be replaced by Belfast Cavehill (for North), Belfast Connswater (for East) and Belfast Blackstaff or South West (for West). The SDLP representatives had no very strong feelings on the point but suggested, with some diffidence, that the three constituencies be called North, South West and South East. The Ulster Unionist Council suggested the same names as the SDLP, though with some more vigour, on the basis that its proposals were more geographically correct descriptions of the area covered. The DUP were content with the names, particularly Belfast North and East. So far as Belfast West was concerned Mr Robinson suggested that the name Belfast South West might be appropriate. Alliance presented a number of alternatives. It accepted Belfast North as a title but wanted to change the other two to South West and South East. In addition it proposed geographical titles, namely Belfast Cavehill (for North), Belfast Blackstaff (for West) and Lagan or Lagan Bank or Lagan Side for Belfast East.

37. If there are to be three constituencies I do not believe that they should retain the names which have been assigned to them in the Provisional Recommendations. While "Belfast North" still gives a good general description of the area covered by the constituency, the same does not apply to "Belfast West" or "Belfast East". A substantial element of what was formerly South Belfast would now be found in each of those two constituencies. The idea of identifying them by physical features such as rivers or hills is attractive, if only because it moves away from bland geographical designations. Unfortunately the new East Belfast seat is too big for it to be identified simply by reference to the Connswater or the Lagan. The same applies to the new West

Belfast seat in relation to the Blackstaff. Accordingly, with a little reluctance, I suggest that the three names should be:

Belfast North
Belfast South West
Belfast South East

SUMMARY

38. In conclusion, I summarise my recommendations as follows:

1. There should be four seats for the Belfast area, not three;
2. Those four seats should be defined in the manner described at paragraphs 26-29 above;
3. Those four seats should retain the names of the existing seats;
4. If there are not to be four seats then the three seats as defined in the Provisional Recommendations should be adopted without any alteration but with the names referred to in paragraph 37; and
5. In the absence of any submissions to the contrary, and indeed in the virtual absence of any submissions at all, I agree that each constituency should return five members to any future Northern Ireland Assembly.

JOHN O'HARA

Assistant Commissioner
4 October, 1994

ANNEX II

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

REPORT OF A LOCAL INQUIRY IN RESPECT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES OF EAST ANTRIM, NORTH ANTRIM AND SOUTH ANTRIM, CONDUCTED ON 9 MAY 1994 AT THE ANTRIM FORUM, ANTRIM.

I have the honour to report to you as follows:-

1. The Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland announced a Review of parliamentary constituency boundaries on 19 March 1993 and published Provisional Recommendations for revised boundaries on 27 January 1994. On 8 March 1994 I was appointed an assistant Commissioner by the Secretary of State under section 2 of and Schedule 1 to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 and was subsequently invited by the Commission to conduct a public Local Inquiry into the Commission's proposals affecting the county constituencies of East Antrim, North Antrim and South Antrim.

2. On 19 March 1993, the enumeration date for the purposes of the present Review, the total number of parliamentary electors in Northern Ireland was 1,153,477, and the number of constituencies in Northern Ireland was 17. The electoral quota (EQ) or average number of electors for each constituency, was therefore 67,852. The Commission are obliged by the statutory Rules for Redistribution of Seats which form Schedule 2 to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 to recommend constituency electorates as near as is practicable to the EQ. On the enumeration date the electorate of North Antrim was 5.0% above the EQ, the electorate of East Antrim was 4.7% below the EQ, and the electorate of South Antrim was 3.1% above the EQ.

3. The Commission are also statutorily obliged, as far as practicable, to avoid dividing local government wards between constituencies, unless it appears to them that a departure is desirable to avoid an excessive disparity between the electorates of constituencies and the EQ, or between the electorate of any constituency and that of neighbouring constituencies. In the three constituencies of East Antrim, North Antrim and South Antrim two wards containing electors are substantially divided by constituency boundaries, namely Clady ward in Antrim local government district (LGD) and Monkstown ward in Newtownabbey LGD.

4. The Commission are also obliged to take account, as far as they reasonably can, of inconveniences attendant upon alterations of constituency boundaries, other than alterations to preserve the integrity of local government wards; and also to take account of local ties which might be broken by such change. Such local ties might include those between wards belonging to the same LGD or the same district electoral area (DEA). In the area covered by the Inquiry which I was invited to undertake, there are seven LGDs. Of these, Ballymena, Ballymoney and Moyle LGDs are wholly contained in the existing North Antrim constituency and Carrickfergus and Larne LGDs are wholly contained in the existing East Antrim constituency. The ward of Clady in Antrim LGD is divided between the existing South Antrim, Belfast North and Belfast West constituencies. Newtownabbey LGD is divided between the existing East Antrim and South Antrim constituencies. Three DEAs are divided between constituencies: Antrim Line and University DEAs in Newtownabbey LGD and Antrim South East DEA in Antrim LGD.

5. In the Statement of Reasons for Provisional Recommendations issued by the Commission on 31 March 1994, the Commission laid down the principles which had guided their Provisional Recommendations and, in relation to the three constituencies covered by the Inquiry, stated that:

> "It was noted that on the enumeration date the parliamentary electorate of Newtownabbey LGD was 56,108 and that such an electorate could form the nucleus of a Parliamentary constituency. However, after careful consideration it was felt that Newtownabbey LGD could not form a constituency by itself without seriously disrupting the existing pattern of constituency boundaries in County Antrim (which substantially respects the boundaries of six of the seven County Antrim LGDs) and creating a ripple effect disturbing other constituency boundaries. It was further considered that, as all of the existing County Antrim constituencies are within 5% of the EQ, only slight adjustments were needed to accommodate new ward boundaries.
>
> "The Provisional Recommendations, nevertheless, take the opportunity to equalise the electorates of the East Antrim and South Antrim constituencies by transferring the ward of Jordanstown (in Newtownabbey LGD) into the present constituency of East Antrim. The transfer of the ward provides for the constituency boundary to run parallel to Three Mile Water, providing a readily identifiable boundary. Moreover, Jordanstown is part of University DEA which is already divided between the two constituencies and therefore the transfer involves no further disruption to the structure of DEAs. Hence the electorates of the proposed East Antrim and South Antrim county constituencies would be 67,749 (0.2% below the EQ) and 67,045 (1.2% below the EQ) respectively.
>
> "It is proposed that the boundaries of North Antrim county constituency remain unaltered; the constituency has an electorate of 71,215 which is, acceptably, 5% above the EQ and the constituency comprises the three whole LGDs of Ballymena, Ballymoney and Moyle, which the Commission prefer should remain intact."

6. The Commission went on to recommend that each of the three proposed constituencies should return five members to any future Northern Ireland Assembly.

7. In the area covered by the Inquiry, the Provisional Recommendations therefore only alter existing constituency boundaries to avoid the division of wards and to transfer the ward of Jordanstown from the existing South Antrim to the East Antrim constituency, thereby helping to equalise the electorates of those two constituencies. The proposals would have the following effect on the electorates of the three constituencies under consideration, and on their percentage deviations from the EQ.

Constituency	**Electorate on Enumeration Date**	**(%+/- EQ)**	**Proposed Electorate**	**(%+/- EQ)**
East Antrim	64,654	(-4.7%)	67,749	(-0.2%)
North Antrim	71,215	(+5.0%)	71,215	(+5.0%)
South Antrim	69,938	(+3.1%)	67,045	(-1.2%)

8. No change was recommended by the Commission to the North Antrim constituency; and the changes recommended to the East and South Antrim constituencies would result in reducing the deviation in the size of electorates of both constituencies from the EQ. No wards would be divided by constituency boundaries, but the recommendations would continue to divide University DEA in Newtownabbey LGD between constituencies.

9. Following publication of the Provisional Recommendations there was a period of one month during which representations relating to the proposals could be submitted, but few were received. They included:

(a) two representations organised by the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) from bodies of more than 100 electors objecting to the recommendations;

(b) a comprehensive scheme revising constituency boundaries for the whole of Northern Ireland by Sinn Fein which included radical proposals for the area covered by the Inquiry. I describe these proposals later but mention now a discrepancy between the figures given by Sinn Fein in their submission and those suggested in a map attached to that submission. This appeared to arise as a result of the ward of Glenravel in Ballymena LGD being depicted on their map as being in their proposed constituency of North Antrim, whereas the figures submitted by Sinn Fein placed the ward in their adjacent proposed constituency of Mid Antrim;

(c) another comprehensive scheme for the whole of Northern Ireland, recommending radical alterations to constituencies by the Conservative Party Northern Ireland Area Council. I also describe this scheme later in my report; and

(d) other representations either supporting the Commission's Provisional Recommendations or offering no comment on them.

10. The Commission were obliged to hold a Local Inquiry in accordance with section 6 of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986. The Inquiry was announced on 31 March 1994. The main political parties, Members of Parliament, district councils and all those who had submitted representations were informed of the Inquiry, and notice of the Inquiry was published on 31 March 1994.

11. At the time the Inquiry was convened, further representations submitted to the Commission by the SDLP were referred to me. This proposed that the ward of Grange in Ballymena LGD should be transferred to the constituency of South Antrim, on the grounds that the area relates more naturally to Toome and Randalstown; and that the deviation of the North Antrim constituency electorate from the EQ would thereby be reduced. The SDLP stated in this further representation that these views had been subscribed to by signatories to the petitions earlier submitted.

12. Attendance at the Inquiry was very small, and barely in excess of 30 people. One further representation was handed to me at the commencement of the Inquiry, by Sinn Fein. This was an amendment to their original proposal to the effect that Grange ward should be transferred from their proposed North Antrim constituency into their proposed Mid Antrim constituency.

13. The Inquiry commenced at approximately 10.00 am and was completed by approximately 11.15 am. Thereafter I visited the ward referred to in submissions made to the Inquiry by the SDLP.

14. At the Inquiry oral submissions were made on behalf of five political parties as follows:

1. The Rev. Ian Paisley MP made representations on behalf of the Democratic Unionist Party and as the Member of Parliament for North Antrim;

2. Mr. Forsythe MP made representations on behalf of the Ulster Unionist Party and as the Member of Parliament for South Antrim;

3. Ms. McGuinness made representations on behalf of Sinn Fein, and her representations were supported by and added to by Councillor McGarry of Moyle District Council and Mr. Lyttle, Party Organiser for Sinn Fein for County Antrim;

4. Councillor McClelland of Antrim District Council made representations on behalf of the SDLP;

5. Mr. Ford, Alliance Party, made representations in his capacity as General Secretary to the party and as a member of Antrim Borough Council.

The representations made to the Inquiry by Dr. Paisley and Mr. Forsythe were to the effect that the Provisional Recommendations of the Commission were acceptable and neither sought to make any submissions contrary to the recommendations of the Commission.

15. On behalf of Sinn Fein, Ms. McGuinness made two proposals: one general, and one specific to the constituencies, the subject of this Inquiry. The general proposal related to the creation of six seats in the Greater Belfast area and a further 11 seats throughout the remainder of the Province. She indicated, on behalf of Sinn Fein, that it was attempting, in its proposals, to represent the unionist/nationalist electorate as fairly as possible, while at the same time taking into account the urban, industrial and rural divides in the Province. She proposed on behalf of Sinn Fein that the Belfast area be extended to include six seats (to be known as Belfast East, Belfast North, Belfast West, Castlereagh, North Loughside, South Loughside). The proposal would, naturally, have a knock-on effect in relation to other constituencies. The proposals by Sinn Fein in respect of the Belfast constituencies will be considered in greater detail by Mr. John O'Hara who held a Local Inquiry in respect of the recommendations affecting the constituencies of Belfast East, Belfast North, Belfast South and Belfast West on 4 and 5 May 1994.

16. In County Antrim, Sinn Fein proposed that the present North Antrim constituency should gain the four Coleraine LGD wards of Atlantic, Dunluce, Hopefield and Royal Portrush but lose the five Ballymena LGD wards of Broughshane, Glenravel, Glenwhirry, Kells and Slemish. These five wards would become part of a Mid Antrim constituency, which would also include: the whole of Larne LGD; the five Newtownabbey LGD wards of Ballyclare North, Ballyclare South, Ballynure, Ballyrobert and Doagh; and the whole of Antrim LGD except for the three wards of Aldergrove, Clady and Crumlin. Aldergrove, Clady and Crumlin would then form part of an extended Lagan Valley constituency. The proposals were broadly similar to those considered at a public Local Inquiry into proposed constituency boundaries held at Ballymena in 1980 during the Commission's Third Periodical Review, and which I note were rejected at that time.

17. I have considered carefully the proposals made by Sinn Fein and do not consider that they justify the Commission altering their Provisional Recommendations. The Sinn Fein proposal would have a substantial effect upon constituency boundaries and the make-up of constituencies, particularly in the Greater Belfast area and therefore would affect other constituencies by virtue of the ripple effect. Sinn Fein's proposals amount to a radical redrawing of constituency boundaries. So far as that redrawing would affect any constituency, the subject of this Inquiry, I consider that long-established identities which exist within the majority of the present constituencies would be adversely affected and I do not think that the adverse effect outweighs the advantages which Sinn Fein advocate for their re-drawing of the boundaries.

18. Sinn Fein's particular point related to the ward of Grange which, Ms. McGuinness submitted, had a natural affinity with the Toome area. Sinn Fein proposed 'transferring this with the ward of Glenravel'. Councillor McGarry, as stated above, endorsed the submission of Ms. McGuinness, and added that he felt that the Boundary Commission would have to address the question of population growth in North Antrim. Mr. Lyttle, also endorsing Sinn Fein's proposal, added that he also supported the proposal in respect of Grange ward. He specifically stated that it is a natural hinterland for the Toome area and Randalstown area, in that the people of Grange ward worship in the Toome area and are educated in that area. His proposal was that Grange ward should be moved from the constituency of North Antrim into the constituency of Mid Antrim.

19. Councillor McClelland, in his submissions on behalf of the SDLP, made two general points and one specific point. Generally, he argued that the Province needed proportionality in the representation of the two communities and argued, further, that the recommendations of the Commission would not be conducive to the success of discussions between constitutional parties in the Province in respect of opportunities for devolved government. I concluded that these were matters not within my terms of reference.

20. His specific proposal was that Grange ward should be moved into the constituency of South Antrim. He argued that this transfer would reduce the North Antrim electorate from being 5% in excess of the EQ to only 2.3% above it.

21. On behalf of the Alliance Party, Mr. Ford took the view that he did not see any particular benefit in what he described as 'breaking the Ballymena boundary' by transferring Grange ward into the neighbouring constituency. He argued that his party did not see 5% as an excessive deviation from the EQ.

22. I have considered the question of moving Grange ward from the North Antrim constituency. I have visited the area and note that there seems to be an affinity with the area of Toome and Randalstown and accordingly have some sympathy with the views expressed about this area by Ms. McGuinness, Mr. Lyttle and Councillor McClelland.

23. The North Antrim constituency consists of, *inter alia*, the whole of Ballymena LGD, in which LGD lies the whole of Grange ward. I am of the opinion that it would not be appropriate, in the circumstances, to remove from the North Antrim constituency a portion of the Ballymena LGD when the present proposal has neatly managed to place in the constituency three complete LGDs. I consider that the recommendations of the Commission in respect of North Antrim are desirable in that three complete LGDs have been kept intact and that this is more appropriate than to remove from the constituency one small portion of the Ballymena LGD.

24. I therefore recommend that the Commission adhere to their Provisional Recommendations for the three constituencies in respect of which the Inquiry was held. I do not consider that any of the submissions to which I have referred justify the Commission's departing from their Provisional Recommendations. I recommend further that each constituency should return five members to any future Northern Ireland Assembly.

25. In the course of the Inquiry, I received written representations from Sinn Fein, which I have already described. In addition I considered all the written submissions made to the Commission in response to their Provisional Recommendations. These included proposals from the Conservative Party Northern Ireland Area Council which proposed the transfer of the North Antrim constituency Moyle LGD wards of Glenaan, Glenariff, Glendun and Glenshesk and the South Antrim constituency Newtownabbey LGD wards of Ballynure, Hawthorne and Mossley to the East Antrim constituency, which, in turn, would lose to the constituency of Belfast North, the wards of Abbey, Coole, Dunanney, Valley and Whitehouse. The South Antrim constituency would gain the Lagan Valley constituency Lisburn LGD ward of Glenavy. I have had regard to these written representations in arriving at my recommendations.

GERALD SIMPSON

Assistant Commissioner
15 September, 1994

ANNEX III

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND ("the Commission")

REPORT OF A LOCAL INQUIRY IN RESPECT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES OF LAGAN VALLEY, NORTH DOWN, AND STRANGFORD CONDUCTED ON 13 JUNE 1994 AT THE TOWN HALL, NEWTOWNARDS

I have the honour to report to you as follows:

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Commission announced a Review of parliamentary constituency boundaries on 19 March 1993. On 27 January, 1994 the Commission published Provisional Recommendations for revised boundaries.

1.2 On 8 March 1994 I was appointed an assistant Commissioner by the Secretary of State under section 2 of and Schedule 1 to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 and was invited on 28 March 1994 by the Commission to conduct a public Local Inquiry into the Commission's proposals affecting the three county constituencies of Lagan Valley, North Down and Strangford.

2.1 On 19 March 1993 (the enumeration date for the purposes of the present Review), I am advised that the total number of registered parliamentary electors in Northern Ireland was 1,153,477, and the number of constituencies in Northern Ireland was 17. The electoral quota (EQ) or average number of electors for each constituency, was therefore 67,852.

2.2 The Commission are obliged by the Rules for Redistribution of Seats which are set out in Schedule 2 to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 to recommend constituency electorates as near as is practicable to the EQ.

2.3 I am advised that on the enumeration date the electorate of Lagan Valley constituency (74,856) was 10.3% above the EQ; that of North Down (70,392) was 3.7% above the EQ; and that of Strangford (70,836) was 4.4% above the EQ.

3.1 The Commission are also obliged by virtue of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, to avoid dividing, so far as is practicable, local government wards between constituencies, unless it appears to them that a departure is desirable to avoid an excessive disparity between the electorates of constituencies and the EQ, or between the electorate of any constituency and that of neighbouring constituencies.

3.2 In the three constituencies covered by the Inquiry, five wards containing electors are substantially divided by constituency boundaries, namely Dromara in Lisburn Local Government District (LGD); and Ballyhanwood, Cairnshill, Knockbracken and Moneyreagh in Castlereagh LGD.

4. The Commission are also obliged to take account, as far as they reasonably can, in all the circumstances, of inconveniences attendant upon alterations of constituency boundaries (other than alterations to preserve the integrity of local government wards) and also to take account of local ties which might be broken by such change. The Commission take the view that such local

ties might include those between wards belonging to the same LGD or the same district electoral area (DEA). In the area covered by the Inquiry which I was invited to undertake, there are four LGDs. Of these, Ards LGD is wholly contained within the Strangford constituency; North Down LGD is wholly contained in the North Down constituency; and Lisburn LGD is wholly contained in the Lagan Valley constituency. Castlereagh LGD is however divided four ways, between the Lagan Valley, North Down, Strangford, and Belfast East constituencies. Three DEAs are substantially divided between constituencies: Castlereagh Central, Castlereagh East and Castlereagh South in Castlereagh LGD.

STATEMENT OF REASONS

5. In the Statement of Reasons for Provisional Recommendations issued by the Commission on 31 March 1994, the Commission laid down the principles which had guided their Provisional Recommendations and, in relation to the three constituencies covered by the Inquiry, stated that:

> '20. On the enumeration date the present constituency of Lagan Valley was 10.3% above the EQ, which the Commission consider should be reduced. The Commission consider that the electorate of the constituency can be readily reduced by excluding from it the Castlereagh LGD wards of Carryduff East, Carryduff West and the part wards of Cairnshill and Knockbracken. In keeping with the Commission's wish to avoid dividing LGDs between constituencies these changes also make the boundaries of Lagan Valley constituency coterminous with those of Lisburn LGD and a constituency in its own right. The proposed county constituency of Lagan Valley would have an electorate of 70,668 (4.2% in excess of the EQ).

Mid Down, Castlereagh and Newtownards and North Down Constituencies

> '21. To replace the existing South Down constituency, a new county constituency of Mid Down is proposed. This proposed constituency would inherit those parts of Down LGD (though not the wards of Donard, Murlough, Shimna and Tollymore) and that part of Banbridge LGD now forming part of the constituency of South Down. In order to bring the constituency to an acceptable size, it is recommended that it should extend northwards to include the Ards LGD wards of Ballygowan, Comber East, Comber North, Comber West, Killinchy, Lisbane and Scrabo and as already mentioned, include the County Down Banbridge LGD ward of Loughbrickland. The Commission note that their Provisional Recommendation to include in the proposed constituency the ward of Scrabo divides the DEA of Newtownards with which local residents more readily identify. The proposed constituency of Mid Down would be predominantly rural in character and geographically smaller than the present South Down constituency. The electorate of the constituency would be 63,153 (6.9% below the EQ).
>
> '22. Castlereagh LGD is now divided between four constituencies which the Commission find unacceptable. The majority of the electorate of Castlereagh LGD are in the present constituency of Strangford but a large number also reside in the constituency of North Down and some in the constituencies of Belfast East and Lagan Valley. In keeping with avoiding LGDs being divided between constituencies wherever practicable the proposed county constituency of Castlereagh and Newtownards includes the whole of Castlereagh LGD; but to bring the constituency to an acceptable size it is proposed to include in it parts of Ards LGD (Ballyrainey, Bradshaw's Brae, Central, Glen, Gregstown, Movilla and Whitespots wards) which are connected by the main A20 road to Dundonald in Castlereagh LGD; and parts of North Down LGD (Cultra, Holywood Demesne, Holywood Priory and Loughview wards). By including in the constituency the four Holywood wards, the

Commission noted that they would be dividing North Down LGD and Holywood DEA and might be underestimating the links which have developed between Holywood and the rest of North Down LGD, and especially Bangor. However without the addition of these wards, the proposed constituency of Castlereagh and Newtownards would be 63,734 (6.1% below the EQ). The character of the proposed constituency is predominantly suburban (it embraces the commuter towns of Carryduff, Dundonald, Holywood and Newtownards) and the electorate may have broadly similar social and economic concerns. The electorate of the proposed constituency of Castlereagh and Newtownards would be 72,210 (6.4% above the EQ).

'23. The North Down county constituency would embrace North Down LGD (but not Cultra Holywood Demesne, Holywood Priory and Loughview wards) and the Ards LGD wards of Donaghadee North, Donaghadee South, Loughries, Millisle and the whole of Ards Peninsula DEA on the enumeration date had an electorate of 66,137 (2.5% below the EQ). The Commission considered whether it was right to divide North Down LGD between constituencies, as already mentioned, and whether the Ards LGD ward of Loughries (with its close proximity to Newtownards) should form part of the proposed constituency of Castlereagh and Newtownards. In both cases the Commission accorded greater weight to the need to equalise the electorates of the two constituencies, feeling that public opinion might not in the case of North Down support a proposed constituency 10% above the EQ.

'24. It has only been possible to achieve the distribution of electorate between the proposed constituencies of Castlereagh and Newtownards, Mid Down and North Down by dividing Ards, Down and North Down LGDs between constituencies. The Commission have been faced by a number of constraints involving the distribution of the electorate and geographical considerations affecting Strangford Lough and the Ards Peninsula.'

6. In summary, the Provisional Recommendations alter the boundaries of Lagan Valley constituency only in order that it should be coterminous with Lisburn LGD; but elsewhere the effect is more radical. Castlereagh LGD forms the nucleus of the proposed new constituency of Castlereagh and Newtownards, which also includes the Holywood area (in the present North Down constituency) and Newtownards town. The proposed North Down constituency would embrace the whole of the Ards Peninsula, and North Down LGD (but not Holywood); and those parts of Ards LGD, including and to the south of Scrabo ward, would be in the new proposed Mid Down constituency. The proposals would create electorates of the following size:

Constituency	**Electorate on Enumeration Date**	**(% +/- EQ)**
Castlereagh and Newtownards	72,210	+ 6.4%
Lagan Valley	70,668	+ 4.2%
Mid Down	63,153	- 6.9%
North Down	66,137	- 2.5%

7. Each of the proposed constituencies (as indeed, each constituency throughout Northern Ireland) would return five members to any future Northern Ireland Assembly.

REPRESENTATIONS

8. Following publication of the Provisional Recommendations there was a period of one month during which representations relating to the proposals could be submitted. Those which were received were made available for public inspection at district council offices throughout Northern Ireland and were referred to me. They included representations from political parties

and elected representatives, district councils, and other interested bodies and members of the public and representative groups.

9. The Commission were obliged to hold a Local Inquiry in accordance with section 6 of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986. The Inquiry was announced on 31 March 1994. The main political parties, Members of Parliament, district councils and all those who had submitted representations were informed of the Inquiry, and notice of the Inquiry was published on 31 March 1994.

10. The Inquiry was well attended. There was some disruption to the proceedings. This arose out of objections to the presence of representatives of Sinn Fein. I made clear my position and that I would hear the views of all those present. The Inquiry was commenced at 10.30 am and concluded on the same day at approximately 3.00 pm.

11. Prior to hearing the oral representations I had read the written submissions made by all the interested parties. I have also read the further written representations, which were submitted to me on behalf of Sinn Fein (SF) and by Mr Bustard of Holywood. Following the Inquiry but before preparing my report, I considered again all those representations made available to me by the Commission.

12. For ease of reference I record that oral representations were made as follows:

(i) Mr Robinson, MP (accompanied by Councillor Gibson of Ards Borough Council) on behalf of the Ulster Democratic Unionist Party (DUP);
(ii) Mr Curran on behalf of SF;
(iii) Councillor O'Hagan on behalf of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP);
(iv) Mr Donaldson on behalf of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP);
(v) Councillor Osborne on behalf of the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland (Alliance);
(vi) Mr White in his capacity as Town Clerk and Chief Executive of Castlereagh Borough Council;
(vii) Mr Wilson in his capacity as Mayor of North Down representing North Down Borough Council;
(viii) Councillor Ogborn of North Down Borough Council on behalf of the Holywood Residents' Association;
(ix) Mr Cumming on behalf of the North Down Conservative Association;
(x) Mr Davidson, a local resident;
(xi) Sir Edward Archdale; and
(xii) Councillor Coulter of Ards Borough Council.

OTHER MATTERS

13.1 At this juncture I consider it appropriate to draw the Commission's attention to matters which were raised as a result of their Provisional Recommendations, though not germane to the Inquiry.

13.2 Councillor O'Hagan on behalf of SDLP made a representation in a general form to the effect that the Provisional Recommendations were unacceptable, stating that "the party considers the overall direction and thrust of the Provisional Recommendations to be seriously flawed and unhelpful to building the trust and confidence of the nationalist community in Northern Ireland in the impartiality and fairness of the electoral system and therefore detrimental to the goal of strengthening confidence in constitutional politics". Implicit in the comments of the SDLP was the suggestion that proportional representation be introduced.

13.3 In addition to the general comments made by the SDLP, it referred to the constituencies of (a) South Down, (b) Newry and Armagh and (c) Mid Ulster. Reference was also made to the Commission's "stated reasons in respect of its proposals in the Belfast borough constituencies".

13.4 By letter dated 24 February 1994, SF stated that it objected to all the proposed changes save and except those affecting the constituencies of Foyle and Belfast North on the general grounds that many of the changes were unfair and inequitable. No specific examples of such unfairness and inequity were given. This allegation was addressed in general terms by a redrawing of boundaries with the creation of new constituencies. The proposal was that the Belfast area be extended to include six Greater Belfast seats (which in the view of SF provided for growth in population and for natural expansion), and the creation of a further 11 constituencies.

13.5 In so far as the proposals affected the three constituencies of Lagan Valley, North Down and Strangford, these would be replaced by four constituencies: a South Loughside constituency consisting of North Down LGD and parts of Ards LGD, including Donaghadee; a Castlereagh constituency comprising the whole of Castlereagh LGD and four Belfast LGD wards now in the constituency of Belfast East; a Strangford constituency comprising the greater part of Ards LGD including Newtownards and the Ards Peninsula and the greater part of Down LGD, including Downpatrick; and a Lagan Valley constituency comprising most of Lisburn LGD and three Antrim LGD wards. Four Lisburn LGD wards comprising the Poleglass and Twinbrook areas would be added to the present constituency of Belfast West.

13.6 In some respects, the proposals were not radically different from the Commission's Provisional Recommendations but it was especially in relation to the Poleglass and Twinbrook areas that SF sought to press their views. I refer to these areas later.

14. Alliance in its written submission advocated that all elections be conducted using the single transferable vote system of proportional representation.

15. I make no comment or recommendation in respect of many of these matters as they fall outside my remit.

LAGAN VALLEY CONSTITUENCY

16. So far as the Commission's recommendations with regard to the constituency of Lagan Valley are concerned, these recommendations were on the whole accepted by all those who gave written or oral evidence, with the exception of SF.

17. SF's oral submissions concentrated on the areas comprising Twinbrook and Poleglass. SF gave an historical narrative as to the origins of the Poleglass district referring to its creation to alleviate a housing shortage in West Belfast. SF suggested that a survey carried out demonstrated that the local electors would opt to have representation in a West Belfast constituency and drew attention to various governmental and official bodies which exercised functions in West Belfast to accommodate people who would live in the Lagan Valley constituency. It was suggested by SF that these amounted to important local ties between these areas and West Belfast. Whilst SDLP had no specific recommendations for the Lagan Valley constituency, Councillor O'Hagan opined that the Commission's proposals did make sense and recognised that the growth in electorate of the Lagan Valley constituency needed some change. The SDLP felt it untrue that the majority of people in Poleglass and Twinbrook wished 'to be accommodated elsewhere' in a West Belfast constituency.

18. Positive support for the Commission's proposals was given by Alliance, DUP and UUP. I am conscious that the Commission's wish is to avoid dividing local government districts between constituencies and the boundaries of the proposed Lagan Valley constituency are coterminous

with those of Lisburn LGD. This results in a certain neatness and proportionality which is attractive. Taking this into account in conjunction with the views expressed by the majority of those who gave evidence, I would recommend that there be no changes in the Commission's proposals for the Lagan Valley constituency. I am aware, however, that the arguments affecting the Poleglass and Twinbrook areas were also heard at the public Local Inquiry held at Belfast City Hall on 4 and 5 May 1994. The assistant Commissioner who conducted that Inquiry had the benefit of evidence other than that presented to me. The Commission will want to have careful regard to the report of that Local Inquiry in respect of these wards, and the importance of the Belfast LGD boundary generally.

HOLYWOOD WARDS

19. So far as the constituencies of North Down and Strangford are concerned, the issues addressed to me were in the main directed at the proposal which removed the North Down LGD wards of Cultra, Holywood Demesne, Holywood Priory and Loughview (the Holywood wards) from the North Down constituency and transferred them to the proposed new constituency of Castlereagh and Newtownards.

20. The evidence given to me was overwhelming in favour of retaining the *status quo* i.e., the return of the Holywood wards to the North Down constituency.

21. That it was overwhelming can be judged from the following:

(a) the political parties of Alliance, DUP and SF were manifestly in favour of the reinstatement of the Holywood wards;

(b) this was clearly supported by Mr White on behalf of Castlereagh Borough Council and Mayor Wilson on behalf of North Down Borough Council. A comprehensive, yet concise statement which I found persuasive was contained in the representations submitted to the Commission by North Down Borough Council on 16 February 1994, a copy of which is attached to this Report (Annex A);

(c) various individuals also spoke in favour of the retention of the *status quo*. Councillor Ogborn (on behalf of the Holywood Residents' Association) contended that the proposed changes made drastic changes in local ties between Holywood and the rest of the borough. From a geographical point of view, Councillor Ogborn saw the proposals as leaving Holywood "sticking out like a sore thumb". While this was apparent from a geographical point of view, Mr Ogborn saw that by leaving Holywood exposed in this fashion it was cut off from the area with which it had its usual social and cultural links. He contended that it did not have any such links with Newtownards or Castlereagh;

(d) Mr Davidson, a resident of the Seahill/Craigavad area, considered (a) himself to have a Holywood address, (b) Holywood to be his town, and (c) considered himself a resident of North Down. There was nothing to draw him to Newtownards or to Castlereagh. Support for this view was given by Mayor Wilson; and

(e) I had also drawn to my attention the fact that a petition had been circulated amongst the residents of Holywood. The petition was succinctly headed "Hands Off Holywood". Over 2,000 signatories were obtained to that petition on two separate Saturday mornings. The collation of the petition did not involve any direct house to house canvassing but was obtained by placing the petitions in Holywood Town Centre shops and businesses and at a stall in the Town's High Street.

22. Those in favour of the retention of the Holywood wards in the proposed North Down constituency maintained that a number of local ties would be broken. In the main these were that:

(a) geographically Holywood was linked to North Down;

(b) it had historical links with the North Down area and Bangor in particular since the Middle Ages;

(c) public transport and communication links between Holywood and Castlereagh or Newtownards were poor. The road systems were of a secondary nature. The local Holywood services are sourced and provided from Bangor, eg., roads, water, sewerage, council functions, police, Housing Executive, etc;

(d) there is a marked and obvious physical barrier dividing Holywood and Castlereagh/Newtownards. This physical barrier is the range of hills known as the Holywood Hills. Other physical indicators are the shared coastline and the coastal walk (part of the Ulster Way which runs from Holywood through to Groomsport) which provided a link with North Down; and

(e) reference was also made to joint leisure and cultural facilities and pursuits which are enjoyed by Holywood and Bangor residents.

23. Mr Robinson summed up the matter by stating "I think Holywood is an integral part of North Down Borough Council. It has nothing in common in terms of culture, history, geography one might say, with either Newtownards or Castlereagh. It seems unwise to separate it from what is a coastal constituency when it in itself is a coastal area". Mr Robinson went on to state that "it seems that in terms of the desire and identity of the people of Holywood they see themselves as being part of North Down rather than part of Newtownards and Castlereagh".

24. The UUP adopted a different stance. In a letter of 25 February, 1994 to the Commission it stated "We are aware that concern has been expressed over the inclusion of the four Holywood wards . . . To accede to this pressure would require a compensating adjustment which is not immediately obvious and may in any case upset the equilibrium of immediately neighbouring constituencies". Oral evidence was given on behalf of UUP by Mr Donaldson. In his evidence Mr Donaldson stated that while he recognised the very legitimate concerns of the Holywood people and understood and recognised the points that had been made by them, he stated that as a party he was required to take a wider view and looking at the Commission's overall recommendations supported the inclusion of Holywood within the Castlereagh and Newtownards constituency. Mr Donaldson accepted that when he referred to the Holywood wards being linked with the Castlereagh and Newtownards constituency he saw those links solely in terms of an electoral link. Mr Donaldson was asked did he see any problem if the Holywood wards were put back into North Down with a compensating factor of the Ards LGD ward of Loughries being put into the proposed Castlereagh and Newtownards constituency. His reply was that he would have difficulty if the compensating factor was the ward of Scrabo. In view of this response he appeared to accept the suggested transfer of Loughries ward, subject to the caveat that this would shift the balance between Castlereagh and Newtownards (which was the largest proposed constituency) making North Down a very large constituency. He expressed a concern that this would leave a constituency running from Portaferry round the coast to Holywood making it large and unwieldy. Notwithstanding this Mr Donaldson had earlier stated support for the proposals for a new constituency of North Down which re-united the Ards Peninsula and Bangor stating that this was an historic association.

25. So far as elected Members of Parliament were concerned a letter received on 28 February, 1994 from Sir James Kilfedder was firmly in support of placing the Holywood wards in the North Down constituency. Mr Taylor gave his opinion that many people from Holywood like those from Castlereagh and Newtownards use the Ulster Hospital as their hospital. Whilst this may indicate some common link that the electorate of Holywood have with the electorate of Castlereagh and Newtownards, this was countered by Mayor Wilson who stated succinctly that the Ulster Hospital is used simply because it is there. He indicated that residents were very

unhappy about the closure of the Bangor Hospital concluding by inference that if there was a facility similar in Bangor to that of the Ulster Hospital, the residents of Holywood would use the Bangor facility.

26. I am therefore satisfied, having heard the evidence, that there are special local ties of a geographical, historical and cultural nature (as particularised above) which would be broken if the Holywood wards were taken from the North Down constituency. It is my recommendation that having considered this, the Holywood wards should be removed from the proposed new seat of Castlereagh and Newtownards and form part of the proposed North Down constituency.

LOUGHRIES WARD

27. If the Commission were of a mind to accept this recommendation then it might well wish to consider what compensating factor, if any, should be made. It was considered by Alliance that the compensating factor should be the Ards LGD ward of Loughries and that its logical place was in the Castlereagh and Newtownards constituency. This was also accepted inferentially by UUP. In a letter of 25 February 1994, DUP stated that Loughries ward was geographically, historically and socially connected to Castlereagh and Newtownards. At the Inquiry it was stated by Councillor Gibson on behalf of DUP that the inclusion of Loughries ward in the North Down constituency drove a significant wedge into the body of Newtownards which caused widespread concern. From an ecclesiastical, economic, educational and social standpoint Loughries ward was inextricably linked with Newtownards. Support was given for this view by Mayor Wilson. He submitted that Loughries was a rural ward without any distinct separate population and that it identified with or looked towards Newtownards rather than Bangor and North Down. From a geographical point of view 90% of the population of Loughries ward lives on the outskirts of Newtownards.

28. Having taken cognisance of the reasons outlined above it would be my recommendation that the Holywood wards should form part of the North Down constituency and that for the reasons set out above, Loughries ward should become part of the new Castlereagh and Newtownards constituency.

29. The enumeration date electorate of the new Castlereagh and Newtownards constituency totals 72,210; the electorate of the extended North Down constituency totals 66,137. If the recommended adjustments were made then the situation would be:

(a) Castlereagh and Newtownards (as postulated) 72,210 less the Holywood wards 8,476 Total 63,734 - add back the Loughries ward 2,279. **Total 66,013**.

(b) North Down constituency (as postulated) 66,137 less the Loughries ward 2,279 Total 63,858 - add back the Holywood wards - 8,476. **Total 72,334.**

(c) The figures at (a) would show a deviation of 2.7% below the EQ, and in the case of (b) a deviation of 6.6% above the EQ. Notwithstanding this it was my view that to do so would not give rise to such an excessive disparity that would make the proposal unacceptable.

ARDS PENINSULA

30. At the Inquiry I heard evidence critical of the Commission's Provisional Recommendations to attach the other eight Ards LGD Peninsula wards to the proposed constituency of North Down. The UUP said that "to have a constituency running from Portaferry right round the coast to Holywood is a large and unwieldy constituency . . .". Lower Ards DUP said that in their area 90% of people had no ties with North Down and Mr Cumming questioned whether arguments for attaching Loughries ward to Newtownards did not equally apply to wards south of Carrowdore.

However, my decision to recommend that Loughries ward should form part of the proposed Castlereagh and Newtownards constituency is based on that ward being immediately adjacent to Newtownards coupled with the very close ties which exist. I would not want to dispute that ties also exist between the Ards LGD ward of Carrowdore (and other wards further south) and Newtownards and that those living in these wards look to Newtownards rather than to Bangor. The situation in relation to Donaghadee and Millisle may be different and residents there may feel that they have more in common with Bangor than Newtownards.

31. But in the case of all these wards, the Commission have been faced with a difficult choice when seeking to achieve a balance in the size of electorates of constituencies and these considerations (involving as they do the division of Ards LGD) may have weighed more heavily with the Commission than local ties. In the absence of these arithmetic reasons, I agree that it would have been preferable for the ward of Carrowdore and those wards to the south of it to remain in the same constituency as Newtownards. However in evidence to the Inquiry and in favour of the Peninsula being included in the proposed North Down constituency it was said that it made a coastal constituency with common issues of tourism and fisheries.

SCRABO WARD

32. At this juncture I also consider it appropriate to draw to the attention of the Commission the comments which were made concerning the Ards LGD ward of Scrabo.

33. At paragraph 21 of their Statement of Reasons the Commission proposed that the new Mid Down constituency should contain, *inter alia*, the Scrabo ward. While the view of Alliance was ambivalent concerning Scrabo, Councillor Coulter suggested that the Comber area (presumably thus referring to Scrabo) gravitates towards Newtownards with educational and economic links. Sir Edward Archdale as a resident of Comber also objected to the Commission's proposals. The DUP saw Scrabo ward as an integral part of Newtownards. Councillor Gibson, in his oral submission, saw the links between Scrabo ward and Newtownards as being similar to those which link Loughries ward to Newtownards (as referred to above), in addition seeing as a specific link the development of the West Winds estate (equating essentially with the Scrabo ward) since its inception in the 1960's and 1970's as an integral part of Newtownards. As a result of the efforts of local schools, churches and various social organisations, the West Winds estate had become integrated fully in Newtownards. The UUP saw no difficulty with the Commission's proposals to bring Scrabo ward within the new Mid Down seat. The UUP considered that this was justified on the grounds of Scrabo's traditional association with Comber which it is proposed should be included in the Mid Down constituency. The UUP went on to point out that in its opinion the ward was important to obtaining a balance within the new Mid Down constituency. The UUP considered that the removal of Scrabo ward from Mid Down would leave that proposed constituency under quota. Mr Taylor as Member of Parliament stated, by way of interjection, that he had not received any objection from a constituent of the Scrabo ward who was opposed to being linked with Comber.

34. There was therefore a divergence of opinion as to what should happen to the Scrabo ward. While on one hand it would seem that the arguments for placing Loughries ward in the Castlereagh and Newtownards constituency should also apply to the placing of Scrabo ward in that constituency, it should be borne in mind that to do so would leave the Mid Down constituency under quota. Its electorate totals 63,153; whilst the Scrabo ward is comparatively small (enumeration date electorate 1,827), nevertheless its removal, would reduce that to an electorate of 61,326, i.e., 9.6% below the EQ.

35. If the Commission were to accept such an electorate then I would recommend that Scrabo ward be included in the proposed constituency of Castlereagh and Newtownards on the grounds

that its links with Newtownards are similar to those which link Loughries ward to Newtownards. To do so would have the effect of giving that constituency (as enlarged by Loughries ward) a total electorate of 67,840 (only 12 electors below the EQ), and would avoid the Commission dividing the Newtownards DEA.

ARDS WEST DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREA

36. Comber and Killinchy lie to the south of Scrabo ward in the Ards West DEA. The DEA now forms part of the Strangford constituency. Under the Commission's Provisional Recommendations the whole DEA would be detached from the rest of Ards LGD and be placed in the new constituency of Mid Down. As already mentioned, views were expressed during the Inquiry over ties between Comber, Killinchy, Dundonald and Newtownards. Given their geographical proximity, these ties are probably stronger than those between say Comber and Downpatrick, but conflicting views were expressed. The area is one which gravitates towards Newtownards under present local government arrangements but, as in the case of the ward of Scrabo, other arithmetic considerations will have had a part to play in the Commission's decision to join the DEA to the proposed Mid Down constituency. On the evidence presented I was unable to come to any firm conclusion about the extent of inconveniences which might be attendant on the alteration proposed by the Commission and of any local ties which would be broken as a result. The Commission may only want to review their decision in the light of other recommendations made in respect of the proposed adjacent constituency of Mid Down.

NAMES OF CONSTITUENCIES

37. During the course of the Inquiry and in some of the written submissions reference was made to the name of the new constituency of Castlereagh and Newtownards. Expressed preferences were for the abbreviation of the name to Castlereagh and Ards. There were no objections to this proposal, which I therefore support and recommend.

NUMBER OF CONSTITUENCIES

38. In their written representations to the Commission, the DUP invited consideration be given to increasing the number of constituencies in Northern Ireland. At the Inquiry Mr Robinson said that this matter had already been raised at the Local Inquiry held at Belfast City Hall in May, and whether there should be three or four seats for Belfast. He therefore confined his remarks to the assumption that I would be dealing with seats broadly in line with the 17 provisionally recommended by the Commission. I received no other oral evidence on this aspect of the Commission's recommendations.

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

39. The remit of the Commission and hence the Inquiry was also to consider and recommend the number of members to be returned by each constituency to the Northern Ireland Assembly. No oral evidence was presented to the Inquiry on this subject and given that my recommendations do not radically alter the size of electorates of the constituencies which were the subject of the Inquiry, I recommend that each constituency, as revised by my other recommendations, should return five members to the Assembly.

SUMMARY

40. Accordingly, the conclusions I have reached and recommendations I make to the Commission, which are illustrated in the map at Annex B to this Report, are as follows:

(a) I found insufficient evidence to recommend changing the Commission's boundary proposals for the constituency of Lagan Valley, but acknowledge that representations to transfer the Poleglass and Twinbrook areas of Lisburn LGD to one of the Belfast seats will have been considered in greater depth at the Local Inquiry held in Belfast. The Commission will want to have regard to the report of that Inquiry before reaching a conclusion;

(b) there is overwhelming evidence to support the view that the Holywood wards should not be separated from the other parts of North Down LGD, and I recommend that they be included in the same constituency;

(c) by virtue of the close proximity and strong ties which exist between Newtownards and the Ards LGD ward of Loughries, that ward should be detached from the proposed constituency of North Down and be placed in the same constituency as Newtownards, in other words the proposed constituency of Castlereagh and Newtownards;

(d) those wards to the south of Loughries ward (namely the wards of Ballywalter, Carrowdore, Kircubbin, Portaferry and Portavogie) have stronger ties to Newtownards than to Bangor but for reasons of maintaining a balance between the electorates of the proposed Castlereagh and Newtownards and North Down constituencies, I support the Commission's decision to place the wards in the proposed constituency of North Down;

(e) the links between the Ards LGD ward of Scrabo and Newtownards are similar to those which link Loughries ward to Newtownards. I recommend that Scrabo ward be included in the proposed constituency of Castlereagh and Newtownards provided that the resultant electorate of the proposed constituency of Mid Down is otherwise acceptable;

(f) Comber and Killinchy in the Ards West DEA probably have a greater affinity with Newtownards than with Downpatrick, but I was unable to reach any firm conclusion about the extent of the inconveniences which might be attendant on the proposal that this area be detached from the present Strangford constituency;

(g) there was popular support for the name of the proposed constituency of Castlereagh and Newtownards to be changed to Castlereagh and Ards, and I so recommend;

(h) I received no evidence to make possible any recommendation to the Commission affecting the number of constituencies for Northern Ireland in so far as the area covered by my Inquiry was concerned; and

(i) finally, I recommend that the revised constituencies which I propose, namely Castlereagh and Ards, Lagan Valley and North Down should each return five members to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

COLIN D GOWDY

Assistant Commissioner
23 September, 1994

ANNEX A

NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

16th February, 1994

Mr. J. R. Fisher,
Secretary,
Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland,
Frances House,
9-11, Brunswick Street,
BELFAST, BT2 7GE.

Dear Mr. Fisher,

WESTMINSTER ELECTIONS – NORTH DOWN PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY

I refer to Mr. McDowell's letter of 21st January, 1994, and your response of 28th January, 1994.

As previously indicated, the Council is in opposition to the Commission's proposals to remove the four Holywood local government district wards from North Down and include them in the new Castlereagh and Newtownards county constituency.

In support of its opposition, the Council would make the following submission:-

(1) Probably more than any other area in the North Down Borough, Holywood has a sense of identity, community and pride in its town. Its character is distinct and not in keeping with the rural market town of Newtownards or the anonymous suburban sprawl of Castlereagh. It has no identity with either.

On the other hand, the Commission's proposals create a totally unnatural division between the Cultra and Craigavad wards. The character of both is identical and yet the proposals would draw the constituency boundary between the two.

(2) Holywood gravitates in an east and west direction on excellent road and rail communications along the coast to Bangor and Belfast. There is no easy transport communication with Castlereagh or Newtownards other than along minor country roads or by detour into Bangor or Belfast. The Holywood Hills form a natural geographical barrier between the two. There is no easy public service transport between the two.

(3) There is no history of travel to work between Holywood and Newtownards or Holywood and Castlereagh.

(4) Holywood has a maritime identity much more in keeping with Bangor and the Ards Peninsula than Castlereagh and Newtownards. The famous North Down Coastal Path is an important physical link between the two, as is the tradition of water-based recreation.

(5) Holywood's historical ties are with North Down - for example, it's Priory and religious history.

(6) Holywood would look towards Bangor for shopping and recreational facilities.

(7) There is a strong Holywood voice on the North Down Borough Council and the Commission's proposals for Holywood were unanimously opposed. In Holywood, the Council manages and maintains extensive recreational and community facilities in parks, playing fields and community buildings. It has recently invested over £300K on major refurbishment works to the Queen's Hall - the former Town Hall of the Holywood Urban District Council.

(8) Holywood's local services are administered from Bangor - e.g. police, Housing Executive, rates, refuse collection, water, roads, cemeteries.

(9) There are difficulties with an MP representing the interests of more than one local authority if his constituency covers two or more. Because of the nature of the various areas in question, it is considered that there could be less of a conflict of interest between Holywood and the remainder of the proposed North Down constituency than between Holywood and the Castlereagh and Newtownards proposed constituency.

A SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVE

The Commission indicated that the electoral quota is 67,852 and its present proposals for constituencies fall within +/- 7% of this.

The present proposals indicated an electorate of 66,137 for North Down (-2.5% deviation from quota) and 72,210 for Castlereagh and Newtownards (+6.4% deviation from quota).

The electorate of the four North Down local government district wards in Castlereagh and Newtownards is 8,476 and obviously a straight transfer to the North Down constituency would lead to an imbalance of figures.

It is therefore proposed that the Loughries local government district ward (electorate 2,279) be transferred from the proposed North Down constituency to Castlereagh and Newtownards in return for the Holywood local government district wards of Cultra, Holywood Demesne, Holywood Priory and Loughview.

It is submitted that the rural ward of Loughries, without any distinct centre of population, identifies with and looks towards Newtownards for its facilities rather than Bangor and North Down.

The numerical effect of the alternative is set out below:

A Present Proposals

	NORTH DOWN	**CASTLEREAGH & NEWTOWNARDS**
Electorate	66,137	72,210
Deviation from quota	-2.5%	+6.4%

B Alternative Proposal

	NORTH DOWN	**CASTLEREAGH & NEWTOWNARDS**
Electorate	72,234	66,013
Deviation from quota	+6.6%	-2.7%

As can be seen from the above figures, the alternative proposal means that the electoral numbers and percentage deviation from quota have been almost exactly reversed between the two proposed constituencies. The Commission should therefore have no difficulty in accepting the alternative on the question of numbers.

CONCLUSION

For all the above reasons, it is submitted that Holywood should remain with North Down. However, superseding all arguments and proposals, it is considered that the views of the electorate must take precedence.

The Holywood members of North Down Borough Council indicate that they have had numerous contacts from the public to protest against the proposals.

In response to this, a petition has been drawn up and will be presented to the Commission in due course.

I would be obliged if you would bring this submission to the attention of the Commission for their consideration.

Yours sincerely,

John Kennedy
Policy & Co-ordination Officer

ANNEX B

RECOMMENDED UNITED KINGDOM PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Legend

Proposed Parliamentary Constituency Boundary and Name	NORTH DOWN
Provisional Recommendations of the Boundary Commission	
District Council Area Boundary and Name	ARDS LGD
Ward Boundary and Name	CRAIGAVAD

Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland

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CARRICKFERGUS

DONAGHADEE NORTH

BANGOR

DONAGHADEE SOUTH

NORTH DOWN

BELFAST

BELFAST WEST

70055

3.8%

BELFAST EAST

70406

CASTLEREAGH AND ARDS

EAST BREAGH L G D

NORTH DOWN L G D

NEWTOWNARDS

ARDS L G D

LAGAN VALLEY

3.4%

67840

0.0%

72334

6.6%

LISBURN

70668

LISBURN L G D

MID DOWN

61326

-9.6%

4.2%

DROMORE

BALLYNAHINCH

BANBRIDGE

BANBRIDGE L G D

DOWN L G D

DOWNPATRICK

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

REPORT OF A LOCAL INQUIRY IN RESPECT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES OF EAST LONDONDERRY, FERMANAGH AND SOUTH TYRONE, FOYLE AND MID ULSTER CONDUCTED ON 21 AND 22 JUNE 1994 AT THE OFFICES OF OMAGH DISTRICT COUNCIL, OMAGH

Sirs, I have the honour to report to you as follows:

1. The Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland announced a review of parliamentary constituency boundaries on 19 March 1993 and published Provisional Recommendations for revised boundaries on 27 January 1994. On 8 March 1994 I was appointed an assistant Commissioner by the Secretary of State under section 2 of and Schedule 1 to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 and was subsequently invited by the Commission to conduct a public Local Inquiry into the Commission's proposals affecting the county constituencies of East Londonderry, Fermanagh and South Tyrone, Foyle and Mid Ulster.

2. On 19 March 1993, the enumeration date for the purposes of the present Review, the total number of parliamentary electors in Northern Ireland was 1,153,477, and the number of constituencies in Northern Ireland was 17. The electoral quota (EQ) or average number of electors for each constituency, was therefore 67,852. The Commission are obliged by the statutory Rules for Redistribution of Seats which form Schedule 2 to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 to recommend constituency electorates as near as is practicable to the EQ. On the enumeration date the electorate of East Londonderry was 78,268 (15.4% in excess of the EQ); Fermanagh and South Tyrone was 72,289 (6.5% in excess of the EQ); Foyle was 77,169 (13.7% in excess of the EQ); and Mid Ulster was 70,491 (3.9% in excess of the EQ).

3. The Commission are also statutorily obliged, as far as practicable, to avoid dividing local government wards between constituencies, unless it appears to them that a departure is desirable to avoid an excessive disparity between the electorates of constituencies and the EQ, or between the electorate of any constituency and that of neighbouring constituencies. Currently, the following wards are divided by constituency boundaries: Lower Glenshane, Tobermore, Town Parks East and Town Parks West (in Magherafelt Local Government District (LGD)) and Plumbridge and West (in Strabane LGD). However the wards of Lower Glenshane, Plumbridge, Town Parks East, Town Parks West and (Strabane) West are divided between constituencies only geographically, none contain electorate voting in more than one constituency.

4. The Commission are also obliged to take account, as far as they reasonably can, of inconveniences attendant upon alterations of constituency boundaries, other than alterations to preserve the integrity of local government wards; and also to take account of local ties which might be broken by such change. I note the Commission view that such local ties might include those between wards belonging to the same LGD or the same district electoral area (DEA). There are nine LGDs in the area covered by the Inquiry: Coleraine, Cookstown, Derry, Dungannon, Fermanagh, Limavady, Magherafelt, Omagh and Strabane but of these only two LGDs (Magherafelt and Strabane) are divided between constituencies. Magherafelt LGD is divided between the East Londonderry and Mid Ulster constituencies and Strabane LGD is divided

between the Foyle and Mid Ulster constituencies. Four DEAs, Glenelly, Magherafelt Town, Mourne and Sperrin are currently divided between constituencies.

5. In the Statement of Reasons for Provisional Recommendations issued by the Commission on 31 March 1994, the Commission laid down the principles which had guided their recommendations. On the ground that there had been 'a significant and regular increase' in the electorate of Derry LGD, they provisionally recommended that the boundaries of the Foyle constituency could be made coterminous with those of the Derry LGD, forming a Foyle constituency of 64,199 electors (5.4% below the EQ). In recognition of the need to reduce the electorate of the East Londonderry constituency, the Commission provisionally recommended that the area of Magherafelt LGD within the constituency could be reduced by the transfer into the adjacent Mid Ulster constituency of the wards of Castledawson, Glebe and Knockcloghrim, and those parts of Lower Glenshane, Tobermore, Town Parks East and Town Parks West wards all currently in the East Londonderry constituency. This would reduce the electorate of East Londonderry to 66,888 electors (1.4% below the EQ). Given the further proposal that the Mid Ulster constituency should include the whole of Strabane LGD (as well as the areas to be transferred from East Londonderry) the Commission were consequently obliged to provisionally recommend alterations to the southern boundaries of the Mid Ulster constituency; namely that the DEAs of Omagh Town and West Tyrone, together with the wards of Beragh, Killyclogher and Sixmilecross be transferred into the adjacent Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency. This would create a revised Mid Ulster constituency of 69,243 electors (2.1% in excess of EQ). In view of these proposed changes the Commission provisionally recommended that most of Dungannon LGD be removed from the Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency. It was therefore proposed that that constituency would be composed of Fermanagh LGD, the areas transferred from Mid Ulster (described above) and the three Dungannon LGD wards of Augher, Clogher and Fivemiletown, creating a revised constituency of 69,449 electors (2.4% in excess of the EQ). The remainder of Dungannon LGD would, together with the whole of the Armagh LGD, form a new Blackwater constituency of 65,146 (4.0% below the EQ).

6. The Provisional Recommendations therefore substantially alter existing constituency boundaries by dividing both Dungannon and Omagh LGDs and re-dividing Magherafelt LGD but placing the whole of Strabane LGD in the proposed Mid Ulster constituency. Significantly, the town of Magherafelt would move from the present East Londonderry to the proposed Mid Ulster constituency, the town of Omagh would move from the present Mid Ulster to the proposed Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency and Dungannon (and virtually the whole of Dungannon LGD) would be detached from the present Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency to be joined with Armagh LGD in an entirely new constituency of Blackwater. The boundaries of the proposed Foyle constituency would identify in future with those of Derry district council. The Provisional Recommendations would result in the division of the following DEAs: Clogher Valley, Mid Tyrone, Moyola and Sperrin.

7. In summary, the recommendations would have the following effect on the electorates of the constituencies under consideration, and on their percentage deviations from the EQ.

Name of provisionally recommended constituency	**Electorate**	**%+/-EQ**
Blackwater	65,146	- 4.0%
East Londonderry	66,888	- 1.4%
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	69,449	+ 2.4%
Foyle	64,199	- 5.4%
Mid Ulster	69,243	+ 2.1%

8. The Commission recommended that each of the provisionally recommended constituencies should return five members to any future Northern Ireland Assembly.

9. Following publication of the Provisional Recommendations there was a period of one month during which time representations relating to the proposals could be submitted. The Commission received relevant submissions from:

Mr. Tom Hartley, Party Chairperson, **Sinn Fein**
Mr. Leonard Fee, Chairman, **The Conservative Party Northern Ireland Area Council**
Mr. Peter Robinson MP (Belfast East) Deputy Leader, **Ulster Democratic Unionist Party**
Mr. Jim Wilson, Secretary, **Ulster Unionist Council**
The Rev. Dr. William McCrea MP (Mid Ulster)
Mr. Mark Durkan, Chairman, **SDLP**
Mr. David Ford, General Secretary, **Alliance Party**
Mr. J.B. McKinney, Clerk of the Council and Chief Executive, **Omagh District Council**
Mr. Eamon D. Cunningham, President, **Omagh Chamber of Commerce**
Mrs. Mary C. Rowan, Omagh
Mr. Robert Mulligan and constituents resident in the Augher, Clogher and Fivemiletown wards of Dungannon District Council
Mrs. Ellen, Brian, Colish and N. McMackin, Omagh
Mr. Eugene and Kathleen McMackin, Omagh
Cllr. Oliver C. Gibson, Omagh District Council
Ms. Berna McIvor, Chairperson, Foyle **SDLP Constituency Council**
Cllr. Denis Haughey, Constituency Representative, Mid Ulster **SDLP**
Cllr. Arthur Doherty, Constituency Representative, East Derry **SDLP**
Cllr. Tommy Gallagher, Constituency Representative, Fermanagh and South Tyrone **SDLP**
Cllr. Seamus Kerr, Omagh District Council
Ms. Siobhan O'Halleran, **Sinn Fein**
Mr. John David Bustard, Holywood
Mr. Joseph G. O'Hanlon, Bangor
Mr. Esmond Bernie, Vice Chairman, **South Belfast Conservative Association**
Ms. Gerry Cosgrove, Party Administrator, **SDLP**

10. The Commission were obliged to hold a Local Inquiry in accordance with section 6 of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986. The Inquiry was announced on 31 March 1994. The main political parties, Members of Parliament, district councils and all those who had submitted representations were informed of the Inquiry, and notice of the Inquiry was published on 31 March 1994.

11. The Inquiry was well attended. During the Inquiry I received further written submissions from:

Mr. Robert Mulligan.
Cllr. Oliver Gibson, Omagh District Council. Various booklets and other material.
Cllr. Brendan Curran, **Sinn Fein**. Proposals to the Public Inquiry into the Parliamentary Boundary Commission Recommendations for the East Derry, Fermanagh/South Tyrone, Mid Ulster and Foyle constituencies.
Mr. John McKinney, Clerk of the Council and Chief Executive, Omagh District Council. Review of Parliamentary Constituencies - 1994. Submission from Omagh District Council.

12. The Inquiry commenced on 21 June and was concluded the following day.

13. At the Inquiry, oral submissions were made by declared members of four political parties; the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), the Ulster Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), Sinn Fein and the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP). In addition, I heard submissions from Mr. John McKinney, Chief Executive of Omagh District Council, Mr. Seamus Kerr, an independent Councillor, and Mr John Bustard, an interested individual with no declared political affiliation.

14. Following the close of the Inquiry I have taken the opportunity on a number of occasions to visit parts of the area contained in the four proposed constituencies to familiarise myself with districts of which I had little previous personal knowledge.

15. Having carefully considered all the representations made to me, both oral and written, I propose to deal with the matters raised under eight separate headings.

A. Number of Constituencies for Northern Ireland
B. Electoral wards of Augher, Clogher and Fivemiletown in Dungannon District Council area
C. Omagh District Council area
D. Omagh town
E. Mid Tyrone DEA
F. Strabane District Council area
G. Magherafelt District Council area
H. Names of Constituencies

16. In considering these matters, I have been very conscious of the statutory provisions, particularly Schedule 2 to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, which clearly set out the rules to be applied when making recommendations as to the drawing of constituency boundaries. I am aware however that the Act acknowledges that regard has to be had for local ties and I have tried to apply the criteria so far as is practicable. I have also had regard to all the published statements of the Commission, representations received by the Commission and submissions presented to me at the Inquiry.

A. NUMBER OF CONSTITUENCIES

17. The Provisional Recommendation of the Boundary Commission is that there should continue to be 17 parliamentary constituencies in Northern Ireland.

18. The DUP in a written submission urged the Commission to recommend 18 constituencies. At the Local Inquiry, all participants including the DUP accepted the Commission's proposal of 17 constituencies.

19. Accordingly in so far as my consideration of the constituencies covered by the Inquiry held by me are concerned, I accept the Commission's proposal that Northern Ireland should continue to have 17 constituencies.

B. ELECTORAL WARDS OF AUGHER, CLOGHER AND FIVEMILETOWN IN DUNGANNON DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA

20. Prior to the Inquiry a petition signed by 165 constituents objected to the electoral wards of Augher, Clogher and Fivemiletown being included in the proposed Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency. This petition called for the inclusion of these wards in the proposed constituency of Blackwater.

21. Shortly before the opening of the Inquiry one of the signatories to the petition, Mr. Mulligan, sent a letter by fax purporting to withdraw the petition. The letter confirmed that he supported the retention of these wards in the proposed Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency as the petitioners were now satisfied that neither the education nor the health services would be affected in any way by the proposed changes.

22. At the Inquiry Mr. Cooper (UUP) urged that I should accept that the petition had been withdrawn as Mr. Mulligan who purported to withdraw the petition had in fact been the moving force behind the petition in the first place. He further asked me to take note of the fact that no one who had signed the petition had come to the Inquiry to support and lend weight to the petition. Mr Cooper further argued that assurances had been given by the Health and Social Services Board and the Education and Library Board that the fact the wards might be in a different constituency (from the rest of Dungannon LGD) would not prejudice or affect their standing or treatment by the Boards, and so it made sense that the Commission's proposals should be followed.

23. The DUP argued strongly that the three wards in question, as part of the Clogher Valley, had traditional ties with Dungannon and their natural home was in the new constituency of Blackwater. Councillor Oliver Gibson (DUP) in a very informative contribution emphasised that when local government boundaries were being reviewed in 1992 the Clogher Valley lobbied hard and fiercely to make sure that it was kept in Dungannon District Council area.

24. On the other hand the SDLP supported Mr Cooper's view that "the Ballygawley roundabout is as significant a divide as you will find anywhere in Ulster" and supported the contention that the boundary between the local government ward of Ballygawley and that of Augher was a natural and convenient dividing line between the proposed Blackwater and Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituencies.

25. Sinn Fein in principle supported the DUP view but indicated that in practice, because of other considerations relating to the relative numerical size of constituencies, they accepted that Augher, Clogher and Fivemiletown should be included in the constituency proposed by the Commission.

26. The total electorate of these three wards on the enumeration date was 4,231 and if no other changes were to be proposed for the two constituencies affected by a transfer of the wards to Blackwater it would produce an electorate of 65,218 in Fermanagh and South Tyrone (3.9% below the EQ) and 69,377 in Blackwater (2.2% above the quota) - a very acceptable deviation in county constituencies given the Commission's own criteria.

27. I have carefully considered all the points made to me and having regard to my other views below accept that the Commission's proposal that the electoral wards of Augher, Clogher and Fivemiletown be included in the proposed constituency of Fermanagh and South Tyrone.

C. OMAGH DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA

28. The Commission recommended that Omagh District Council area be split between constituencies.

29. There was general agreement at the Inquiry that in an ideal world no LGD should be split between parliamentary constituencies.

30. The Chief Executive of Omagh District Council, Mr John McKinney gave evidence of the unanimous view of the Council that the integrity of its district should be defended. He presented a paper, a copy of which is annexed to this report and marked "Appendix 1" which argued

forcefully for the retention of the whole of the local council area in one constituency and suggested three different scenarios all of which had Omagh town at the centre of a new constituency.

31. Mr McKinney emphasised that the Council itself could not reach any view as to which scenario to recommend but contended that the Council as a whole felt that any one of the three scenarios was preferable to the Commission's proposal which would, in the Council's opinion, harm the development work already "undertaken in economic community development, tourism, community relations and infrastructure provision". Unfortunately, Mr McKinney was unable to explain what "knock-on" effect the various scenarios would have on neighbouring constituencies.

32. The DUP strongly supported Mr McKinney to the extent that Scenario A as set out at page 7 in the written submission corresponded exactly to the proposals that the DUP had already made. Scenario A was the simple proposition that the whole of Fermanagh District Council and the whole of Omagh District Council areas should be included in one constituency giving an electorate of 71,039, a deviation of 4.7% above the EQ. In its recommendation of Scenario A, the DUP emphasised that their driving motivation was to ensure that the whole of the Omagh District Council area remained in one constituency.

33. The Member of Parliament for the Mid Ulster constituency, Rev William McCrea, expressed regret that in supporting Scenario A he would be losing from his constituency the town of Omagh which he had represented for 11 years. The DUP also contended that representation of more than one LGD put a burden on any Member of Parliament. This burden was obviously greatly increased where a constituency comprised parts of more than two LGDs and I noted that the proposed constituency of Mid Ulster would comprise four LGDs or parts of LGDs.

34. Mr William Ross, UUP Member of Parliament for East Londonderry clearly, however, was of the opinion after twenty years as a Member of Parliament, that there was little difficulty in representing a constituency which encompassed parts of a number of LGDs.

35. No one denied that with three Belfast constituencies sharing responsibility for Belfast City Council area it was inevitable that the remaining 25 LGDs had to be divided into 14 parliamentary constituencies. Mr McKinney himself accepted that some LGDs inevitably had to be split but simply pleaded that Omagh be spared.

36. Mr Cooper with some logic argued that there was no sound basis for the contention that splitting a LGD between constituencies was in any way harmful to the interests, economic or otherwise of the people of the district and he further contended that no real evidence had been produced to support the views of the DUP and Omagh District Council. Mr Cooper pointed out that prior to 1982 the Omagh District Council area had been split between constituencies and suggested that the importance of the boundaries of parliamentary constituencies to the well-being and integrity of a cohesive LGD was being vastly exaggerated.

37. The DUP was challenged that the knock-on effect of their proposal to include the whole of Omagh District Council area with Fermanagh resulted in a very strangely shaped Mid Ulster constituency which had no natural centre or focus.

38. It was also strongly argued that Scenario A, although not breaching the Commission's own upper limit of deviation from the EQ, resulted in a constituency which in area was considered to be unreasonable.

39. Even a cursory examination of a map with all the constituencies marked shows Scenario A to be an unnatural constituency which some might regard as contrived. Acceptance of Scenario A

would also result in a Mid Ulster constituency (the alternative name 'Sperrin' was suggested by the DUP) the shape of which was the subject of much adverse comment at the Inquiry.

40. I am satisfied that in an effort to retain the integrity of the Omagh District Council area, neither the Council nor the DUP had adequate regard for the inconveniences attendant on the alterations proposed, or of the local ties which would be broken by these alterations.

41. I have examined carefully the various options canvassed to see if the integrity of Omagh District Council area could reasonably be preserved in one constituency and I have found no acceptable way that this can be achieved. I cannot therefore support any redrawing of boundaries that would preserve the Omagh District Council area within one parliamentary constituency.

D. OMAGH TOWN

42. A number of participants at the Inquiry argued strongly that the town of Omagh should be retained in the Mid Ulster constituency.

43. Mr Haughey (SDLP) in particular, along with his Party colleagues from the Mid Ulster Constituency Association, emphasised that divorcing Omagh town from its northern hinterland would be unacceptable to the people in the area. The SDLP representative contended that to place Omagh in the same constituency as Enniskillen would have adverse affects on both constituencies. They agreed that Fermanagh and South Tyrone would suffer because of the traditional rivalries - which were sometimes quite bitter - that existed between the two major towns.

44. Although there was a difference in emphasis from opposing political spokesmen it was clear that there was general agreement that the towns of Omagh and Enniskillen had traditionally been rivals and had very recently been involved in fairly acrimonious competition relating to the provision of some hospital services.

45. The Rev William McCrea, although advocating the inclusion of both towns in the same constituency freely admitted that the two towns did not sit easily together. He stated that "I genuinely do believe that there is and has been rivalry. There is no use me pretending that there has not been rivalry between Fermanagh and Omagh. Unfortunately in recent time Omagh has felt genuinely that they have not been treated in accordance with what they believe is the best interests of community services for this area, . . .".

46. The Rev McCrea further referred to "the suspicion that is in many of the hearts and minds when you are linking Omagh with Fermanagh. I believe it is essential to remove many suspicions which are genuinely there and I think if you go on the ground you will find that those suspicions are very, very deep . . .". In a further reference to the rivalry between the two areas he talked of Omagh being "stripped of these vital services" and said "The authority is being removed from what is known as the county town of Tyrone . . .".

47. The submission from Omagh District Council also strengthened the argument against including Omagh and Enniskillen in the same constituency. Mr McKinney in presenting the Council's submission, confirmed that economic ties between Omagh and Fermanagh were limited and he emphasised that the Provisional Recommendations of the Commission were unacceptable to the Council as they placed the town "at the periphery of this unnatural constituency".

48. Councillor Gerry McEnhill (SDLP) a former chairman of Omagh District Council and a lifetime resident of Omagh town spoke eloquently of what he described as the "very backward

step" of separating Omagh town from the Mid Ulster constituency and went on to say that "there never has been a really close relationship between Omagh and Enniskillen". He added that if "Omagh should be taken out of Mid Ulster and put into Fermanagh/South Tyrone, I would regard that as a shotgun wedding and a shotgun wedding has never been very satisfactory".

49. Mr Cooper (UUP) while accepting that there was rivalry between Enniskillen and Omagh contended that this did not mean that they could not be put in the same constituency.

50. Conversely many submissions emphasised the positive links that the town of Omagh had with the Mid Ulster constituency.

51. The Rev McCrea MP regretted that his long association with the town would be severed but felt that there was no alternative if his main concern that the Omagh District Council area should be kept intact, was to be achieved. Like the SDLP representations, he referred to Omagh as being "the county town of Tyrone" and even Mr Gibson who was most steadfast in his view that Omagh and Enniskillen should be in the same constituency urged that the four Omagh District Council wards of Drumnakilly, Gortin, Owenkillew and Termon should not be severed from Omagh town as the 4,000 electors affected represented "a very small population which by tradition services itself in Omagh town".

52. Mr McKinney presenting the Council's submission emphasised on a number of occasions that as a general rule Omagh as the county town of Tyrone looked north and north west for its natural hinterland rather than towards Fermanagh. He stressed that private and public partnerships linked Omagh with the North/West of the Province and gave as an important example the Tyrone Economic Development Initiative which united Omagh, Cookstown, Dungannon and Strabane District Councils with "Omagh playing a leading role as expected from the County base". Mr McKinney also readily agreed that the thrust of the first part of the written submission from Omagh District Council stressed Omagh's ties with County Tyrone district councils and Tyrone towns like Strabane and Cookstown rather than Fermanagh.

53. It was the clear implication of Mr McKinney's submission that important traditional ties would be broken if Omagh town were to be separated from its northern hinterland presently situated in the Mid Ulster constituency. Mr McKinney further listed a number of important economic ties between Omagh and districts to the north and west and it was clear from his presentation, while carefully avoiding any comment that might be seen as supportive of a stance taken by any of the political parties, that Omagh's natural ties were not with Fermanagh but with areas north of the town.

54. Mid Ulster SDLP representatives presented very persuasive arguments as to why Omagh town should remain part of the Mid Ulster constituency. Apart from emphasising the points already referred to above they argued that the Mid Ulster constituency needed a central focus or heart and this had for many years been provided by the town of Omagh and to remove the town from that constituency would be a fundamental breach of the rules which require the Commission to take account as far as practicable of any local ties which would be broken by alterations of boundaries. With some feeling Mr Haughey (SDLP) emphasised that "it is inconceivable and unacceptable that . . . Omagh . . . the historic County town of Tyrone . . . should be tacked on as an add-on to another constituency" and he therefore urged that Omagh should remain as the central town of the Mid Ulster constituency.

55. Throughout the Inquiry there was no voice which denied the traditional ties between Omagh town and the Mid Ulster area although the UUP by implication was less convinced of the importance of such ties than other contributors to the debate. I noted the proposal by Sinn Fein that Omagh Town should remain a part of the Mid Ulster constituency.

56. Mr Bustard was a lone voice in urging that Omagh town itself should be split between constituencies and although he advanced a reasonable argument for his proposal it met with no support and I am satisfied that such a proposal would not appeal to any significant body of electors in the area. Mr McKinney seemed in fact to voice the general feeling of local people represented at the Inquiry when he said "splitting the town would be a disaster and certainly I can speak quite positively about the Council's attitude on that. We certainly do not want that to happen. Irrespective of what way you split the town it would be an absolute disaster, an unnatural solution when other solutions are possible".

57. It is very clear from all the contributors to the Local Inquiry that the Commission's preliminary proposals had failed to take into account the very widespread feeling throughout the whole area that Omagh town should not be divorced from its northern hinterland.

58. On the evidence presented I am convinced that if the Commission are to respect as far as possible significant economic, geographical and social ties between groups of electors it is imperative that every effort should be made to ensure that the town of Omagh, the historic centre of the Mid Ulster area, should remain part of that Parliamentary constituency.

E. MID TYRONE DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREA

59. Mr Seamus Kerr, a former Sinn Fein councillor and later non-party councillor on Omagh District Council, made a submission to the Inquiry on behalf of concerned electors in the electoral wards of Sixmilecross, Termon and Drumnakilly in the Mid Tyrone electoral area. Mr Kerr argued forcefully that these areas were closely linked and should all remain in the same parliamentary constituency as Omagh town.

60. While I accept that if it could be achieved it would be an ideal solution to maintain the integrity of every district electoral area, I have not been able to discover any reasonable scheme that would satisfy Mr Kerr's request. Mr Kerr could not suggest a reasonable solution to the problem which he himself posed. And, in trying to suggest an overall solution for the four constituencies, I have not been able to find any scheme which would avoid some of the wards which Mr Kerr referred to as being in Mid Tyrone, falling into two different constituencies.

F. STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA

61. The only oral representation relating to **Foyle constituency** came from Councillor Charlie Duffy (SDLP). He expressed support for the Commission's Provisional Recommendation for the constituency but indicated that the local SDLP branch would look at other proposals. The only other proposals were those made by Mr Haughey in the course of his submission relating to Mid Ulster. Mr Duffy did not object to those proposals insofar as they affected Foyle constituency.

62. I was impressed by the proposals put forward by Mr Haughey. A copy of the map produced by Mr Haughey is reproduced at Appendix 2. These proposals would allow the electoral wards of Slievekirk, Artigarvan and Dunnamanagh to remain in the Foyle constituency. The transfer of these constituencies would bring the electorate of Foyle constituency to 68,749 (1.3% above the EQ). They would also have the effect of facilitating the transfer of Omagh town into the proposed Mid Ulster constituency which is one of the alterations which I believe should be made to the Provisional Recommendations, thereby evening out the discrepancy which would otherwise obtain between the electorates of the proposed Foyle and Mid Ulster constituencies.

63. I recognise that Mr Haughey's proposals have the effect of dividing Strabane LGD among three constituencies. I feel that it is regrettable that I did not have the benefit of any contribution,

written or oral, from Strabane District Council or from any other body or group from that area. In the absence of such representation I have had no option but to proceed to reach conclusions on the evidence available to me. I therefore agree that the wards of Artigarvan, Dunnamanagh and Slievekirk should be transferred from the Mid Ulster to the Foyle Constituency proposed in the Provisional Recommendations.

G. MAGHERAFELT DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA

64. Magherafelt District Council area is currently divided between the constituencies of East Londonderry and Mid Ulster. Under the Commission's Provisional Recommendations only six wards would remain in the East Londonderry constituency, namely Bellaghy, Gulladuff, Maghera, Swatragh, Upperlands and Valley. In written representations made to the Commission in response to their Provisional Recommendations, different political parties put forward different proposals.

65. The DUP proposed that the boundary between the Mid Ulster and East Londonderry constituencies could be improved by following a topographical line which would include the ward of Lower Glenshane in East Londonderry, but bring the wards of Bellaghy and Gulladuff into Mid Ulster. The Lower Glenshane ward lies to the north of Draperstown and West of Maghera and the Bellaghy and Gulladuff wards lie to the south of Clady River but straddle and lie to the north of the A42 and B182 roads. The proposal to include the wards of Bellaghy and Gulladuff in the Mid Ulster constituency were not pressed by the DUP during the Inquiry and I saw no particular evidence to justify interfering with the Commission's proposals in respect of these wards. I return to the ward of Lower Glenshane later.

66. The SDLP, on the other hand, proposed that the ward of Tobermore should not, as now proposed, be included in the constituency of Mid Ulster but should form part of the East Londonderry constituency. This was explained as being necessary to achieve numerical balance between the two constituencies, but the main objection I can see to the proposal is the very unnatural result this would have upon the shape of both constituencies.

67. I was therefore grateful to Mr William Ross, Member of Parliament for the constituency of East Londonderry, for his helpful contribution to the Inquiry. In principle he supported the Commission's recommendations but was receptive to the idea of certain changes to the peripheral areas of the constituency he represents if it were considered necessary to achieve a reasonable solution to the difficult job of redrawing boundaries. In particular, he indicated that he was quite happy for the ward of Lower Glenshane to be placed in the constituency he currently represents.

68. From my own observations, the ward of Lower Glenshane is one which could be accommodated in either constituency, but for reasons of achieving numerical balance between the electorates of the constituencies, I feel that the whole of the ward should be placed in the constituency of East Londonderry. Otherwise I support the Commission's Provisional Recommendations in respect of the District Council area.

H. NAMES OF CONSTITUENCIES

69. The Commission recommended that the constituency which comprises the whole of County Fermanagh and part of County Tyrone should be called Fermanagh and South Tyrone.

70. The UUP urged that the name of the constituency be reconsidered. Mr Cooper (UUP) felt that the name "Fermanagh and West Tyrone" more accurately reflected the make up of the

constituency. He was supported in this view by Sinn Fein. The DUP supported a change of name to "South West Ulster" but had no objection to the UUP proposal.

71. No one supported the recommendation of the Commission and there was a clear feeling that a change of name was appropriate. I therefore agree that the new constituency comprising all of Fermanagh and part of Tyrone should be called Fermanagh and West Tyrone.

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

72. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, I would propose that each constituency in the area which was the subject of my Inquiry should return five members to any future Northern Ireland Assembly.

CONCLUSIONS

73. I have considered a number of different options and have met with the major problem which I am sure confronted the Commission frequently when it tried to produce a reasonable, balanced solution to the task of redrawing boundaries for Northern Ireland - achieving a result that satisfied the recommended criteria set out in the 1986 Act.

74. I agree with Mr Cooper when he said that "no redrawing of the constituency boundaries can be achieved without compromising some of these criteria and also without raising objections from affected *(sic)* groupings and areas".

RECOMMENDATIONS

75. However, having reached the conclusions already set out I recommend the following changes to the Provisional Recommendations of the Boundary Commission.

(a) **Proposed constituency of Fermanagh and South Tyrone**

(i) Remove Omagh Town District Electoral Area along with the ward of Killyclogher;

(ii) Add the Strabane LGD wards of Castlederg, Clare, Glenderg and Newtownstewart; and

(iii) Rename the constituency Fermanagh and West Tyrone.

This results in an electorate of 63,608 which is 6.3% below the EQ, a margin which, in a very large county constituency, is in my view acceptable.

(b) **Proposed constituency of Mid Ulster**

(i) Remove the Strabane LGD wards of Castlederg, Clare, Glenderg and Newtownstewart; remove the wards of Artigarvan, Dunnamanagh, and Slievepark and rename the Magherafelt LGD ward of Lower Glenshane;

(ii) Add Omagh Town DEA and the Omagh LGD ward of Killyclogher.

This results in an electorate of 68,834, just 1.4% above the EQ.

(c) **Proposed constituency of East Londonderry**

Add the Magherafelt LGD ward of Lower Glenshane.

This gives an electorate of 68,588, approximately 1.1% above the EQ.

(d) **Proposed constituency of Foyle**

Add the Strabane LGD wards of Artrigarvan, Dunnamanagh and Slievekirk.

This gives an electorate of 68,749, some 1.3% above the EQ.

76. I have annexed hereto marked "Appendix 3" a map setting out the changes which I recommend.

AIDAN CANAVAN

Assistant Commissioner
16 September, 1994

REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES - 1994

SUBMISSION FROM OMAGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

1. INTRODUCTION

Omagh District Council, at a meeting held on Friday 25 February 1994, passed the following resolution -

> "That this Council objects to the Provisional Recommendation of the Parliamentary Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland whereby the Omagh District Council area would be split across two constituencies and that this Council therefore calls for a local enquiry to be held so that it may defend the integrity of its District."

As a result of that decision I have been asked to represent the Council's corporate position and whilst it is true to state that the various political parties have a party stance, it is also important to put on record the Council's unanimous desire to defend the integrity of its district.

My presentation will focus on defending the integrity of the District in a way that reflects the interests and wishes of the community supported by and reflecting on the economic, cultural, social and historic ties that exist. During my presentation I will provide scenarios that satisfy the stated objectives, not just for the Omagh Council, but our neighbours as well, in terms of retaining a link between the local government boundaries and the parliamentary constituencies.

2. THE CASE PRESENTED

In terms of retaining a link between the local government boundaries and the parliamentary constituencies this objective is outlined in your document entitled "Statement of Reasons" and I quote from page 2 the following extract:-

> "to ensure as far as possible that constituency boundaries conform to local government district (LGD) boundaries, district electoral areas (DEA) boundaries and other boundaries of local significance."

Another quote from page 2 states that the Commission, in formulating its prior recommendations, has been guided by the following principle:

> "to respect as far as possible significant economic, geographical and social ties between groups of electors."

In making these points it is of course realised that it will be necessary to split District Councils but our concern is the unnecessary scale of change brought about by starting at Belfast and working outwards upsetting stable constituencies that did not require major surgery and, in the majority of cases, were not threatened by population variances.

Had the Commission adopted a different methodology of reviewing the constituencies from the periphery of the region it would have had more success in meeting its own criteria of limiting the number and scale of boundary changes to preserve the integrity of Local Government Districts

and it would have enabled the natural and existing geographical areas and constituencies to be retained as change could have been achieved in the conurbation of Belfast where the population shifts are taking place and where it would be more natural to effect the change.

Why should we at the periphery of the region have to suffer to the extent that the County of Tyrone, an area almost capable of two seats, is left without any central position and used to make the numbers up for other counties, and in particular Fermanagh - a county that avoids any change when it comes to deciding boundaries at local and/or parliamentary level.

Being mindful of the foregoing it is not surprising the Council is concerned and suspicious of the proposals, especially if we were to witness another re-organisation of government either at local and/or regional level.

To advance the argument consideration will be given to the proposals as put forward by the Commission and why these cannot find favour within the Council.

The proposal as presented cuts Omagh District in half and places Omagh, the administrative centre of Omagh District Council and the county town, at the periphery of this unnatural constituency. It also deprives Omagh of its natural hinterland, a situation that flies in the face of logic and contrary to stated objectives as documented by previous commissioners involved in local and parliamentary reviews. I will make reference to a few statements that illustrates this point.

In the report of the assistant Boundary Commissioner, Michael W Stitt, B.L., January 1981, several references were made to:

* the splitting of District Council areas
* the natural affinity of the area
* the economic links
* the cultural and social ties
* the existing traffic flows
* the direction of focus

and in doing so he argued that these, together with the natural cohesion provided by the retention of complete Council areas, formed the basis of his approach and thinking in determining his recommendations. No doubt the criteria and general thrust remains somewhat similar in 1994.

The proposal to put part of Omagh District into Fermanagh/South Tyrone fails all the criteria listed above and highlights the point made earlier and that is - that the solution presented is a result of other actions and is not in the slightest representative of the real needs of this rural area in terms of, for example

2.1. Travel to work

* Omagh is the centre for employment in this part of the west, being the largest town outside Derry.
* Omagh is the public sector employment centre of the west having, for example:
  - the Western Education and Library Board [for Omagh, Fermanagh, Strabane and Derry]
  - Omagh District Council, Employer Council for Building Control [for Omagh, Fermanagh, Dungannon, Cookstown and Strabane]
  - Omagh District Council, Employer Council for Environmental Health [for Omagh, Fermanagh, Derry, Limavady and Strabane]

- the DoE Planning Service [for Strabane, Omagh, Fermanagh, Cookstown and Dungannon]
- the DoE Roads Service [for Omagh, Strabane, Dungannon, Cookstown and Fermanagh]
- Northern Ireland Electricity [for Strabane, Omagh and part of Dungannon (Clogher)]
- Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital [for Omagh, Fermanagh and Strabane]
- DoE Water Executive [Omagh and Strabane]
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive [for Omagh, Cookstown and Dungannon]
- Department of Agriculture Drainage Division [for Omagh and Strabane]

All these centres attract employees from a wide catchment area and Omagh on the periphery, as proposed, acts not only against the spirit of the Review but its own criteria.

2.2. Economic Ties

In the new arrangement proposed the economic ties between Omagh and Fermanagh are limited. Economic activity is by tradition developed and focused in a North/South corridor along the Strule/Foyle catchment area and partnerships at private and public sector level have developed in this direction. This statement will now be considered under the following headings.

Tourism

- No official links exist between Omagh and Fermanagh Councils. Links however do exist between Omagh, Strabane, Cookstown and Magherafelt in an organisation funded by Government and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board known as the Sperrins Tourist Development Association.

  Also in tourism, there exists the North West Passage which includes the Councils of Omagh, Strabane, and Dungannon, again funded by Government, Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Europe.

Economic Development

- As in tourism, no official links are present with Fermanagh and indeed economic development activity is centred around TEDI [Tyrone Economic Development Initiative]. The partners in this initiative are the four Councils in Tyrone, namely Omagh, Cookstown, Dungannon and Strabane with Omagh playing a leading role as expected from the county base. This initiative is again supported by Government and the funding agencies.

  Another partnership in economic development also exists between Omagh and Strabane in the form of Tyrone West, a rural development initiative set up with the co-operation and financial assistance of Europe and the private sector.

The stated examples are a clear indication that the focus for co-operation, natural affinity, economic ties and a true sense of 'where we fit' cannot be found in the Review that proposes an unnatural change where a problem did not previously exist.

In the documentation the words 'no alternative' appear and this is rather misleading. There are always alternatives but it requires the ability and willingness to seek these out. It is our opinion that these were not fully explored when viewed from our side and that the integrity of our Council and that of others could have been improved upon. In other words, alternatives did and do exist that would in a more natural cohesive way reflect the wishes of society.

Given that it is the wish of the Council to retain its integrity then the following scenarios could be considered. [IN NO ORDER OF PREFERENCE].

Scenario A - Retain Omagh in its entirety and include the whole of Fermanagh (Map 1 attached)

Omagh DC electorate	31,419
Fermanagh DC electorate	39,620
	71,039

Advantage of this option

In this one move the integrity of Omagh, Fermanagh and Dungannon have been achieved. The new parliamentary electorate figure for the Blackwater constituency (69,377) would still be within the electoral quota upper limit.

It should also be noted that the name for this constituency would require re-naming to reflect the combination of the districts and avoid the 'and' syndrome - a possible solution here might be 'West Ulster'.

Scenario B - Retain Omagh in its entirety and include the whole of Strabane (Map 2 attached)

Omagh DC electorate	31,419
Strabane DC electorate	25,551
	56,970

The shortfall of 6,132 (using the electoral quota lower limit) could be made up by taking 4 wards from the Fermanagh District Council area, eg ward numbers 10, 12, 13 and 14 (7,044 in total).

Advantages of this option

Combination of an area that has a natural affinity, focus and track record in working together.

Scenario C - Omagh and Strabane in their entirety but looking towards Cookstown and Magherafelt for balance. (Map 3 attached).

Omagh DC electorate	31,419
Strabane DC electorate	25,551
Cookstown Ward no 1	1,323
,, ,, 2	1,320
,, ,, 3	1,240
Magherafelt Ward no 1	1,700
,, ,, 11	1,628
	64,181

Advantage of this option

Combination of an area that has a natural affinity, shape, focus and track record in working together.

3. CONCLUSION

As evident from this submission the Council's primary concern is that the district should not be divided up between constituencies and that the natural hinterland of Omagh, the administrative centre for this area, be protected so that the development work undertaken in economic community development, tourism, community relations and infrastructure provision can be allowed to flourish and reach its full potential.

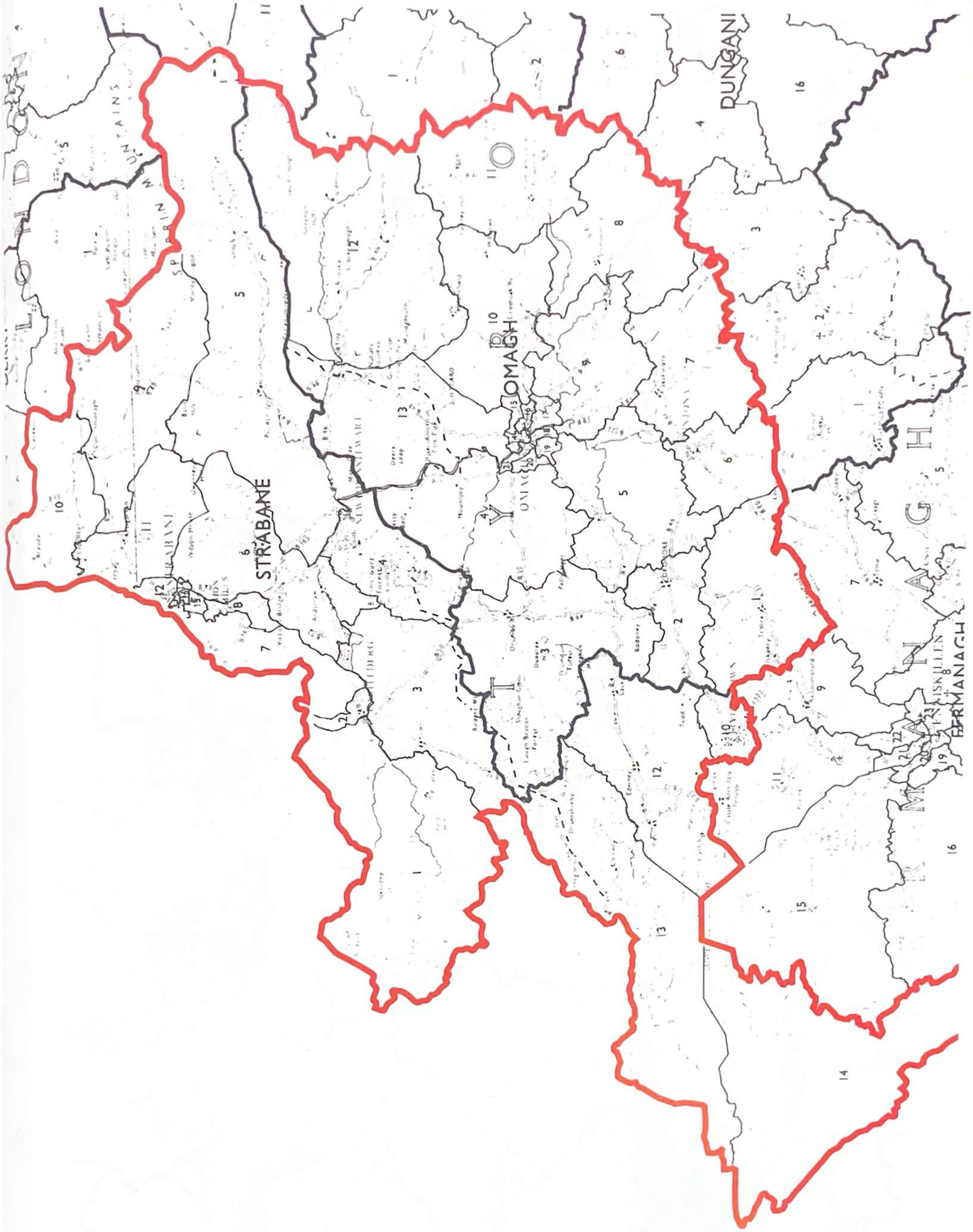
J P McKINNEY MSc

Clerk of the Council and Chief Executive

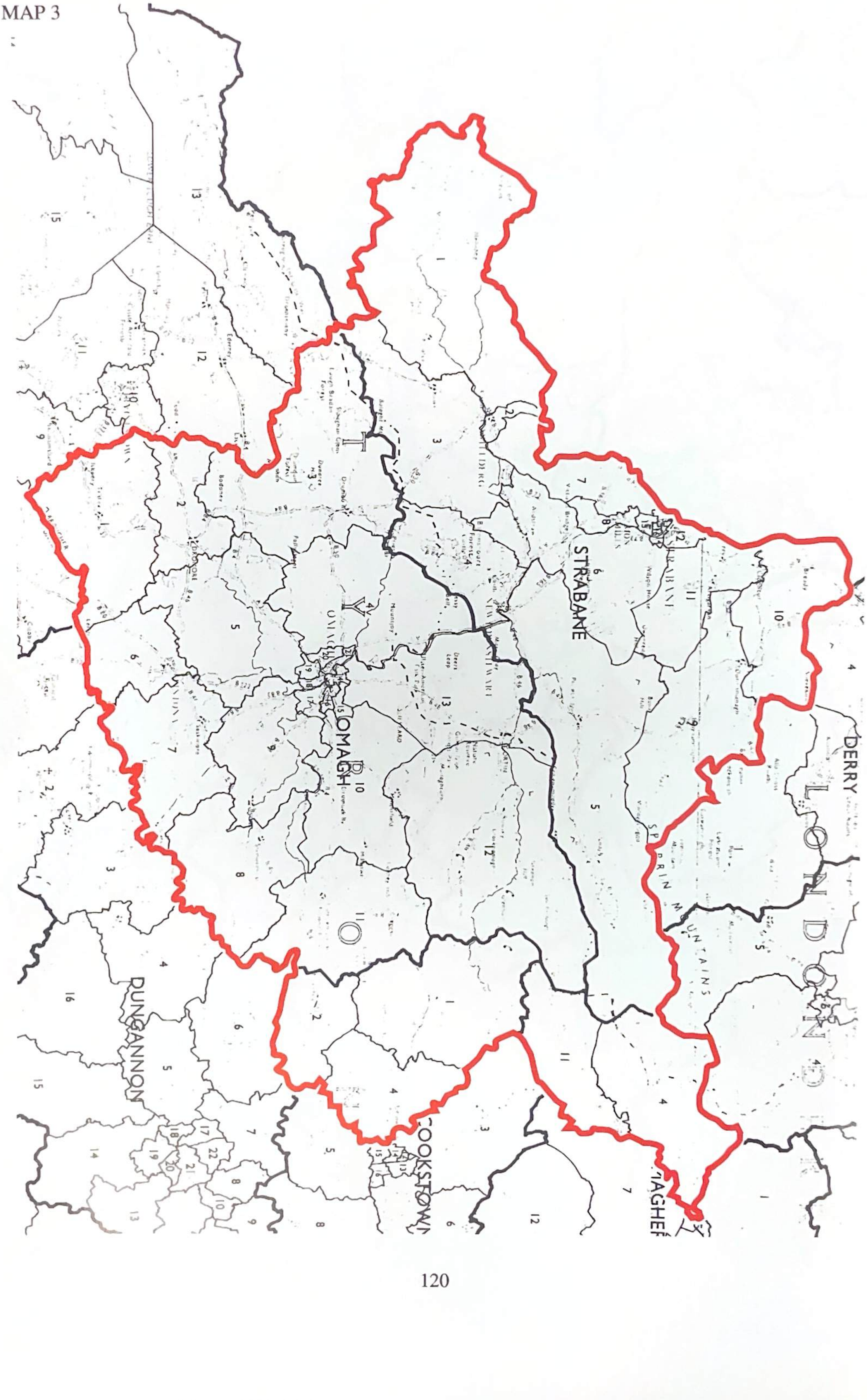
20 June 1994

MAP 1

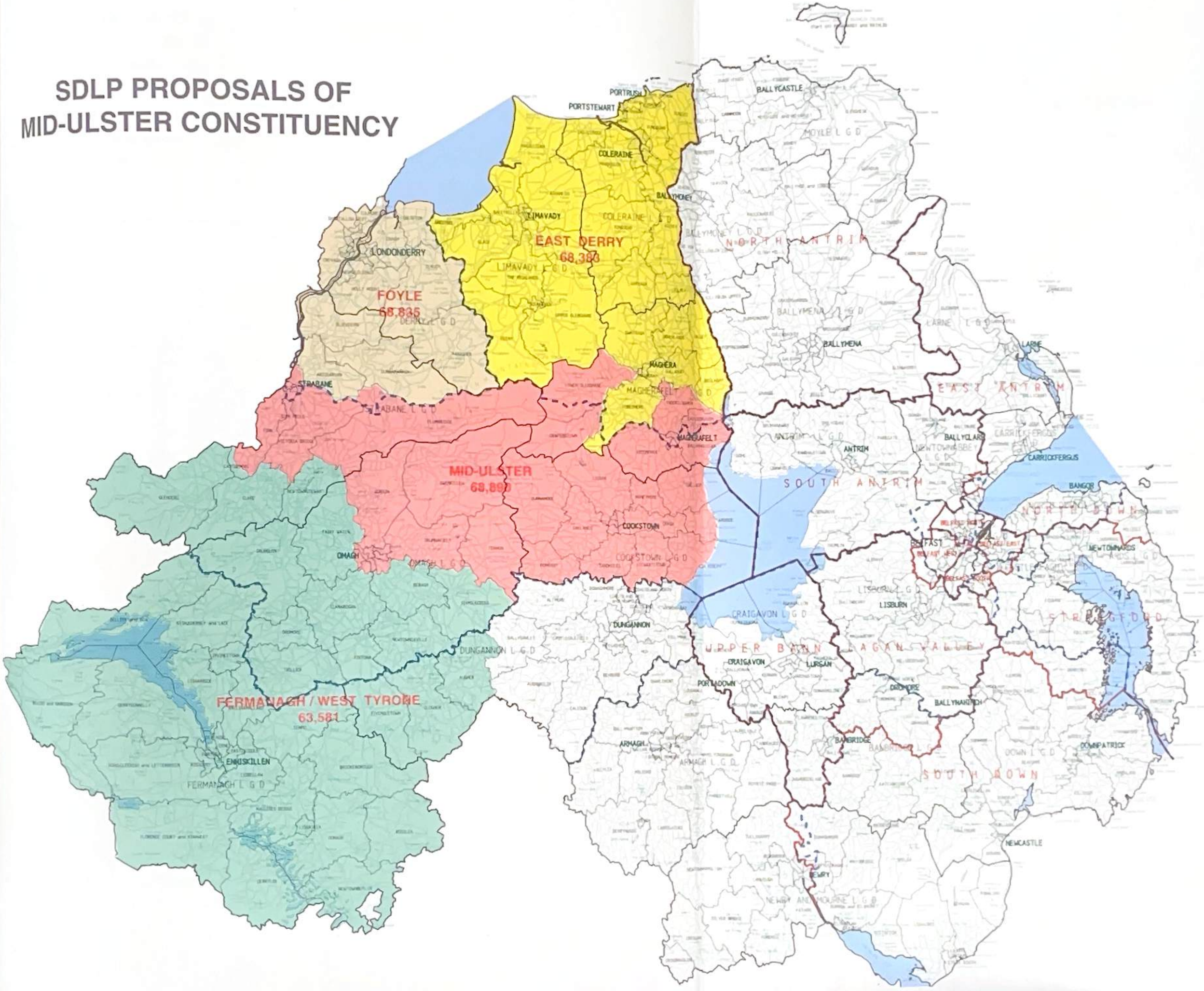
STRABANE
OMAGH
FERMANAGH
ENNISKILLEN
SPERRIN MOUNTAINS
BROUGHER MOUNTAIN
DROMORE
Lough Bradan Forest
Castle Archdale Forest
Forest
Deers Leap
Mountjoy
Badoney
Ederney
Todd
Drumbo
Dunmore
Tullyhogue
Stewartstown
Coalisland
Cookstown
Dungannon
Aughnacloy
Clogher
Caledon
Roslea
Lisnaskea
Irvinestown
Kesh
Belleek
Pettigo
Ballyshannon
Donegal
Omagh
Strabane
Fermanagh
Tyrone
Armagh
Monaghan
Cavan
Leitrim
Sligo
Derry
Donegal
Lough Erne
Upper Lough Erne
Lower Lough Erne


DUNGANI
SPARRIN MOUNTAINS
STRABANE
OMAGH
FERMANAGH

MAP 3


STRABANE
OMAGH
DERRY
LONDON
SPRINGMOUNTAINS
COOKSTOWN
RUNGANNON

SDLP PROPOSALS OF MID-ULSTER CONSTITUENCY



APPENDIX 3

RECOMMENDED UNITED KINGDOM PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Proposed Parliamentary Constituency Boundary and Name — MID-ULSTER

Provisional Recommendations of the Boundary Commission

District Council Area Boundary and Name — STRABANE LGD

Ward Boundary and Name — TRILLICK

ANNEX V

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

REPORT OF A LOCAL INQUIRY HELD IN RESPECT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES OF NEWRY AND ARMAGH, SOUTH DOWN AND UPPER BANN CONDUCTED ON 27 AND 28 JUNE 1994

I have the honour to report to you as follows:

1. The Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland announced a Review of parliamentary constituency boundaries on 19 March 1993 and published Provisional Recommendations for revised boundaries on 27 January 1994. On 8 March 1994, I was appointed an assistant Commissioner by the Secretary of State under section 2 of and Schedule 1 to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 and was subsequently invited by the Commission to conduct a public Local Inquiry into the Commission's proposals affecting the county constituencies of Newry and Armagh, South Down and Upper Bann.

2. In a Statement of Reasons for their Provisional Recommendations issued by the Commission on 31 March 1994, they set out the principles which had guided their Provisional Recommendations:

> "The Rules which the Commission must give effect to when reviewing representation in the House of Commons and making recommendations for constituencies in Northern Ireland are set out in Schedule 2 to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 . . . . In formulating their Provisional Recommendations the Commission have been guided by the following principles, which are intended to reflect the provisions of the Rules:
>
> (a) to adjust constituency boundaries so as to ensure that no local government wards are split between constituencies;
>
> (b) to promote electoral equality to aim at, in the first instance, constituency electorates within a tolerance of 7% (above or below) the electoral quota;
>
> (c) to take account as far as reasonable:
>
> (i) of the inconveniences attendant on alterations of constituencies, and
>
> (ii) of any local ties which would be broken by such alterations.
>
> To do so, the Commission have considered it necessary:
>
> (i) to have regard as far as practicable to existing constituency boundaries;
>
> (ii) to ensure as far as possible that constituency boundaries conform to local government district (LGD) boundaries, district electoral area (DEA) boundaries and other boundaries of local significance; and
>
> (iii) to respect as far as possible significant economic, geographical and social ties between groups of electors.
>
> No two geographical areas are exactly alike and in applying these principles the Commission have had to strike a careful balance."

3. On 19 March 1993, the enumeration date for the present Review, the total number of parliamentary electors in Northern Ireland was 1,153,477, and the number of constituencies in

Northern Ireland was 17. The electoral quota (EQ) or average number of electors for each constituency was therefore 67,852. The Commission are obliged by the statutory Rules to recommend constituency electorates as near as is practicable to the EQ. On the enumeration date the electorates of the three constituencies were as follows:

Constituency	Electorate	+/- % Deviation from the EQ (67,852)
Newry and Armagh	69,550	+ 2.5%
South Down	78,589	+15.8%
Upper Bann	69,093	+ 1.8%

I noted that the electorate of the South Down constituency is appreciably above the EQ.

4. The Commission are also statutorily obliged, as far as is practicable, to avoid dividing local government wards between constituencies, unless it appears to them that a departure is desirable to avoid an excessive disparity between the electorates of constituencies and the EQ, or between the electorate of any constituency and that of neighbouring constituencies. Current constituency boundaries divide the following wards: Derryleckagh, Donaghmore and Windsor Hill[1] in Newry and Mourne LGD; and Quilly in Banbridge LGD. The ward of Dromara in Lisburn LGD is divided between the South Down and Lagan Valley constituencies; but only a small part of Dromara ward, containing 57 electors on the enumeration date, lies in the South Down constituency.

5. The Commission are also statutorily obliged to take account, as far as they reasonably can, of inconveniences attendant upon alterations of constituency boundaries, other than alterations to preserve the integrity of local government wards; and also to take account of local ties which may be broken by such changes. The Commission acknowledge in their published principles that 'local ties' may be of 'an economic, geographical or social' nature; but they also consider that local ties may include those between wards belonging to the same LGD. Five LGDs are situated within the area covered by the Inquiry; Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon, Down and Newry and Mourne. Lisburn LGD is involved only in so far as a small part of Dromara ward is in the South Down constituency.

6. The Commission also believe that 'local ties' may include ties between wards belonging to the same DEA. There are 20 DEAs in the area covered by the Inquiry. Of these, Crotlieve, Newry Town and The Fews DEAs (in Newry and Mourne LGD) and Knockiveagh (in Banbridge LGD) are substantially divided by constituency boundaries.

7. In the Statement of Reasons for their Provisional Recommendations in relation to the area covered by the Inquiry the Commission stated that:

> 'It is proposed that Dungannon LGD (but not the wards of Augher, Clogher and Fivemiletown) should be joined with the whole of Armagh LGD in a new county constituency, thereby minimising further disruption to LGDs. It is suggested that the new constituency should take its name from the River Blackwater, upon which it is centred but other names associating Armagh with Dungannon for Tyrone may command more local support. The alternative of joining Dungannon LGD (but not the wards of Augher, Clogher and Fivemiletown) and Craigavon LGD would create an unnaturally shaped constituency which would be practically 23% above the EQ. To remedy this and to give shape to and facilitate links between the two parts of the constituency would require dividing Craigavon LGD between constituencies and would probably require including in the constituency

1 Although part of the ward lies in the constituency of South Down all the electors of this ward presently vote in the Newry and Armagh constituency.

parts of Armagh LGD, thereby also disturbing the integrity of that LGD. The proposed Blackwater county constituency would have an electorate of 65,146 (4% below the EQ).

'The present scheme of constituencies in County Down, which includes an electorate in the constituency of South Down 15.8% above the EQ, is considered unacceptable. Also, the present boundaries of the Newry and Armagh and the South Down constituencies split a number of wards and divide the Newry and Mourne LGD, thereby effectively separating the town of Newry from its eastern hinterland. As, on the enumeration date, the electorate of Newry and Mourne LGD was 57,371, this LGD would not normally be considered a constituency in its own right (it would be more than 15% below the EQ) but it could serve as the nucleus of a new constituency. To augment the electorate of this new constituency, it is therefore proposed to include in it Newcastle and its environs, which may be considered to be an integral part of the Mourne region and has some historical links with Newry. The proposed county constituency of Newry and Mourne therefore includes the Donard, Murlough, Shimna and Tollymore wards of Down LGD. It is recommended that this division of Down LGD although undesirable in principle is preferable to division along the boundary of Newcastle DEA (which would almost bisect the proposed neighbouring Mid Down constituency); and results in a more equitable distribution of the electorate between the two adjacent constituencies. It was decided to respect the recommendation of the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner, accepted by the Secretary of State, that the ward of Rathfriland (now in Banbridge LGD) does not look to Newry town, and therefore it has been excluded from the proposed constituency of Newry and Mourne. To do otherwise would be to divide Banbridge LGD between three constituencies. The proposed Newry and Mourne constituency would have an electorate of 64,245 (5.3% below the EQ).

'The present constituency of Upper Bann includes the whole of Craigavon LGD, Banbridge Town DEA and the surrounding Banbridge LGD wards of Gilford, Lawrencetown and Loughbrickland. The extended shape of the constituency was noted by the Commission. It was considered that the Banbridge LGD ward of Loughbrickland could be transferred from the constituency into the proposed constituency of Mid Down, thereby achieving a more even distribution of electorate between the two constituencies. This ward lies in the Knockiveagh DEA which is already divided between the two constituencies. The transfer therefore entails no additional disruption to DEAs, whereas to transfer any adjacent ward would divide Banbridge Town DEA between constituencies. Otherwise the only changes recommended to the existing constituency are those necessary to accommodate the new boundaries of Quilly ward. The electorate of the proposed county constituency of Upper Bann would be 67,504 (0.5% below the EQ).'

8. The Commission provisionally recommended that each of the three proposed constituencies should return five members to a future Northern Ireland Assembly.

9. Following publication of the Provisional Recommendations there was a period of one month during which time representations relating to the proposals should be submitted. These were received from all the major Northern Ireland political parties, sitting Members of Parliament representing two of the three constituencies affected by the Provisional Recommendations and some 200 members of the local public and local interest groups. The Commission also received representations from local councillors and representations and petitions submitted by or on behalf of a number of local political party organisations. In the main these were from the Social Democratic and Labour Party, Down District Executive, South Down Constituency Council and the Crotlieve, Downpatrick/Killough, Hilltown, Knockiveagh, Mayobridge, Rowallane, Saul/Strangford and Warrenpoint SDLP branches; the South Down Unionist Association and Banbridge District Council Ulster Unionist Group; and the Ulster Democratic Unionist Party South Down Imperial Constituency Association. The Commission

received representations from Armagh District Council and notice from two other district councils of their intention to submit written representations.

10. It would not be practicable to list here all the written representations received. I am informed that copies of these representations were distributed to the Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon, Down and Newry and Mourne District Councils for public display. The representations were also open to public inspection at the offices of the Boundary Commission and made available during the course of the Inquiry save that the addresses of members of the public were removed. Those addresses were available to me but at no time prior to, during or since the Inquiry was the authenticity of the representations received challenged. Accordingly, I neither made nor caused to be made any enquiries into their *bona fides*.

11. Among these representations were submissions objecting to the Provisional Recommendations subscribed to by bodies of electors numbering one hundred or more in each of the three constituencies. The Commission were therefore obliged to hold a Local Inquiry in respect of these constituencies in accordance with section 6 of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986. The Inquiry was announced on 31 March 1994. 1 am informed that the main political parties, Members of Parliament, district councils and all those who had submitted representations were notified of the Inquiry, and notice of the Inquiry was published on 31 March 1994.

12. Substantive representations subsequently received by the Commission from or on behalf of Down District Council and Newry and Mourne District Council (and other substantial representations including those from the SDLP Newry and Armagh and the SDLP South Down Constituency Councils) were referred to me. During the course of the Inquiry a further written representation was submitted to me by Sinn Fein, entitled: *Sinn Fein Proposals to the Public Inquiry into the Parliamentary Boundary Commission Recommendations for the Upper Bann, South Down and Newry and Armagh Constituencies*. I took full account of these representations.

13. The Inquiry commenced on Monday 27 June 1994 at 10.30 am and concluded late the following day. It was well attended and I was impressed by the manner and quality of the presentations made to the Inquiry. I allowed those making presentations to be cross-examined and sought my own clarification and additional information from witnesses. Every opportunity was offered to those attending to present their points to the Inquiry.

14. At the Inquiry, oral submissions were made by the following:

Organisation	**Spokespersons**	**Witnesses**
Alliance Party of Northern Ireland (Alliance)	Mr David Ford, General Secretary	
Sinn Fein	Councillor Brendan Curran, Craigavon District Council	
South Down SDLP	Mr Adrian Colton, Barrister	Dr Neville Douglas, Senior Lecturer, The Queen's University of Belfast
Down District Council	Mr Owen O'Connor, Clerk of the Council and Chief Executive Mr John Walsh, Solicitor	

Organisation	Spokespersons	Witnesses
Ulster Unionist Party	Mr Jeffrey Donaldson, Hon Secretary, Ulster Unionist Party	Councillor Jim Spiers, Leader, Ulster Unionist Group, Armagh District Council
	Mr Drew Nelson, Hon Secretary, South Down Unionist Association	Mr Norman Finch, Chairman, Newry and Armagh Unionist Association
		Mr Walter McClean, Treasurer, Donaghmore Branch, Unionist Council Association
		Councillor Gerry Douglas, former Chairman, Down District Council
		Mr Bill Martin, Chairman, Mourne Unionist Association
		Mr Ian O'Loan, Newcastle Branch, Ulster Unionist Party.
		Mr Denis Stephens, former Chairman, East Down Unionist Association
		Councillor Albert Colmer, Down District Council, Chairman, Ulster Unionist Ardglass and Dunsford Branch
		Councillor John Dobson, Banbridge District Council
		Councillor Henry Riley, Newry and Mourne District Council

Organisation	Spokespersons	Witnesses
Newry and Mourne District Council	Mr Michael Keogh, Barrister Mr Rory McShane, Solicitor	Professor Michael Laver, Trinity College, Dublin
Ulster Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)	Mr Nigel Dodds, Secretary	Councillor Billy Alexander, Down District Council Councillor William Burns, Newry and Mourne District Council
Newry and Armagh SDLP	Mr Paddy O'Hanlon, Barrister	Councillor John Fee, Newry and Mourne District Council

15. It was frequently the case that the evidence given by, and submissions made by or on behalf of, organisations at the Inquiry echoed their previous written submissions and consisted of highlighting salient points as well as raising objections to arguments made by other parties. Accordingly, when summarising below the main submissions made I encompass oral evidence and submissions and written submissions within the summary and I do not propose to distinguish between them save where I consider it necessary for the purposes of emphasis or clarification.

Alliance Party

In general terms Alliance supported the proposals for the three proposed constituencies of Mid Down, Newry and Armagh and Upper Bann. It favoured the idea of constituencies being based on a particular LGD and in particular it considered that Newry and Mourne was a natural unit based on Newry and Mourne LGD. However, it recognised some problems with the proposed Mid Down constituency and indicated that it would accept the transfer of rural wards in the eastern part of Banbridge LGD to the proposed Newry and Mourne constituency and the transfer of the Down LGD wards around Newcastle to the Mid Down constituency as an alternative to the Commission's proposals.

Sinn Fein

Sinn Fein opposed the proposals and provided counter proposals for revision of the entire constituency borders throughout Northern Ireland. It advocated six constituencies in the Greater Belfast area and its proposals for constituencies in the area under consideration in this Inquiry were radically different to the Boundary Commission's Provisional Recommendations as far as two of the proposed constituencies were concerned, namely Newry and Mourne and Mid Down. Sinn Fein agreed with the Provisional Recommendations in respect of Upper Bann with the one exception that it included the Banbridge LGD ward of Loughbrickland in the Upper Bann constituency. However, Sinn Fein proposed the creation of a Newry/South Down constituency which would consist of 23 Newry and Mourne LGD wards and six Down LGD wards (ie the six wards in Newcastle DEA) and eight Banbridge LGD wards. Accordingly, under the Sinn Fein proposals, South Down would stretch from Bessbrook to Dromore. It proposed that a new Strangford constituency be created which would consist of the remaining 17 Down LGD wards and 18

Ards LGD wards. The remaining seven Newry and Mourne LGD wards would be in a new Navan[1] constituency with all of Armagh LGD and 13 Dungannon LGD wards, so that this constituency would stretch from Coalisland to Crossmaglen.

South Down SDLP

This group opposed the Provisional Recommendations and argued for the retention of a South Down constituency based as closely as possible on the existing South Down constituency. While recognising that some change was necessary due to the extent of the excess of the South Down constituency electorate above the EQ, South Down SDLP suggested that the necessary reduction could be achieved by transferring certain Banbridge LGD wards from the existing South Down constituency into the Upper Bann constituency. It did not accept that there was any justification for splitting Down LGD between two constituencies or for joining part of Down LGD with part of Ards LGD. It recognised the importance of "the Mournes" area being in one parliamentary constituency, but contended that South Down was the appropriate constituency.

South Down SDLP argued that any linkage between Down LGD and the wards of Gransha, Dromore North, Dromore South, Quilly and Bannside in Banbridge LGD or between Down LGD and any of the wards in Ards LGD were very weak. It considered that the South Down constituency should continue to include the Down LGD wards of Donard, Murlough, Shimna and Tollymore, and that Down LGD should not be split between constituencies.

Down District Council

The Council resolved by a majority vote on 14 February 1994 that it should make representations objecting to the Boundary Commission's proposals to alter the constituency of South Down. Accordingly it submitted that the existing South Down constituency borders should be continued save that the four Banbridge LGD wards of Quilly, Gransha, Dromore North and Dromore South should be transferred to a different constituency. Accordingly this submission was very similar to the submission of South Down SDLP. It also rejected the idea of any joinder between part of Ards LGD and Down LGD in a new constituency and supported the retention of Donard, Murlough, Shimna and Tollymore wards within the South Down constituency. The similarity between the Down District Council and South Down SDLP submissions was not perhaps altogether surprising given that it was the Nationalist majority on Down District Council which achieved the Council resolution to oppose the Commission's proposals. Down District Council, however favoured the retention of Bannside ward within the South Down constituency whereas South Down SDLP favoured its transfer to another constituency.

Ulster Unionist Party

This Party's submission included submissions by South Down Unionist Association. The Ulster Unionist Party supported the Provisional Recommendations as being "probably the most practical and realistic solution" to the difficult problems facing the Boundary Commission. The thrust of its submission was that given the existence of an excess quota of the size of approximately half the EQ in the West of the Province and given the decline of the constituency electorates in Belfast, the Newry and Mourne area was the natural place to merge the excess quota from the West with the excess quota in South Down. It considered Newry and Mourne to be a self-contained unit and that the proposal to incorporate Newcastle within the proposed Newry and Mourne constituency was the best way to maintain the integrity of the Mournes area. It considered that the boundary between

1 Referred to as 'Cathedral' constituency in earlier written representations to the Commission.

Newry and Mourne LGD and Armagh LGD was a natural and appropriate boundary and supported the linkage of Armagh with Dungannon in the new proposed constituency of Blackwater.

The Ulster Unionist Party had no counter proposals to the Provisional Recommendations and criticised the counter proposals put forward by those objecting to the Provisional Recommendations. It agreed that the Mournes area should be within one constituency, but did not accept at all the South Down SDLP/Down District Council idea that South Down was the appropriate constituency to contain the area. Rather it was contended that the proposed Newry and Mourne constituency was ideal for that purpose. It agreed with the Boundary Commission that Newcastle and Kilkeel were more appropriately linked with Newry than with Downpatrick and considered the Commission's proposals much superior to either the existing constituency boundaries or any of the counter proposals put forward to the Inquiry.

Newry and Mourne District Council

This Council resolved by majority vote (Nationalist majority out-voting Unionist minority) on 7 February 1994 that it was opposed to the Provisional Recommendations. It considered that the Commission had wrongly placed far too much emphasis on a criterion of attempting to ensure as far as possible that constituency boundaries conformed to LGD boundaries, DEA boundaries and other boundaries of local significance. Indeed it considered that the Commission had misdirected themselves as to the appropriate criteria and their respective importance in adopting this view. It emphasised the fact that when a Newry and Mourne constituency was proposed at the last previous parliamentary Boundary Commission review, that it had been rejected in the report of such review dated November 1982.

Newry and Mourne District Council put forward counter proposals for the boundaries of all the constituencies in Northern Ireland and their proposals were significantly different from the Commission's Provisional Recommendations. In relation to the area under consideration in this Inquiry the counter proposals of Newry and Mourne District Council were:

(a) The South Down constituency would remain in its existing form save that the presently split wards of Derryleckagh and Donaghmore would be entirely located in the South Down constituency and those Banbridge LGD wards presently in the constituency would be transferred to a proposed new Banbridge and Lurgan constituency;

(b) The boundaries of the existing Newry and Armagh constituency would remain save that the part of Donaghmore ward presently in the Newry and Armagh constituency would be transferred to the South Down constituency;

(c) The Upper Bann constituency would be dismembered. All the Banbridge LGD wards would be contained in the proposed new Banbridge and Lurgan constituency; and

(d) The entire Ards LGD wards and ten wards from Castlereagh LGD would be in a proposed new Strangford constituency.

Ulster Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)

DUP was originally in favour of the Provisional Recommendations as it considered them "reasonable, logical and sensible proposals". This Party provided counter proposals for all of Northern Ireland with two sets of alternative boundaries for the proposed Castlereagh

and Ards, North Down and Mid Down constituencies. At the Inquiry it suggested two minor changes to the Provisional Recommendations:

(a) It considered that the ward of Scrabo should be included in the proposed Castlereagh and Newtownards constituency rather than in the proposed Mid Down constituency on the basis that it was an integral part of Newtownards town and was the only ward in the Newtownards DEA not to be included in Castlereagh and Newtownards constituency.

(b) In order to compensate for the loss of Scrabo it suggested that the Ballydown ward of Banbridge LGD be included in the proposed Mid Down constituency rather than in the Upper Bann constituency as it was surrounded by the Loughbrickland and Bannside wards which the Commission proposed should be in the Mid Down constituency.

Newry and Armagh SDLP

This group opposed the Provisional Recommendations and, in particular, it contended that there was no justification for any alteration in the existing Newry and Armagh constituency boundaries. Considerable reliance was laid on the historical, cultural, social education and economic links between the urban centres of Newry and Armagh, and between Newry town and County Armagh as a whole. It was stated that there was no problem with this constituency in terms of the size of its constituency electorate remaining close to the EQ and that problems of excess electorate in other areas ought not to be visited on this constituency.

It supported the proposals of South Down SDLP and Down District Council that the existing South Down constituency be retained subject to alterations along the lines outlined by those organisations. In the overall Northern Ireland context it supported the Newry and Mourne District Council counter proposals for the redrawing of the boundaries of a number of constituencies in Northern Ireland on a significantly different basis than that envisaged by the Provisional Recommendations.

There was obviously a considerable overlap in terms of the reasoning put forward by South Down SDLP, Down District Council, Newry and Mourne District Council and Newry and Armagh SDLP.

The Conservative Party Northern Ireland Area Council

In written submissions the Conservative Party and South Belfast Conservative Association provided counter proposals for the boundaries of all the constituencies in Northern Ireland. These counter proposals involved the retention of four constituencies in Belfast. As far as the areas under consideration in this Inquiry were concerned, the main effect of the counter proposals was to propose the alteration of the Mid Down constituency by the addition of seven more Ards LGD wards and one North Down LGD ward and by taking away nine Banbridge LGD wards from Mid Down. It envisaged the addition of four Banbridge LGD wards to the proposed Newry and Mourne constituency and the addition of the Banbridge LGD wards of Quilly and Loughbrickland to the Upper Bann constituency. This group did not give any oral evidence or make any oral submission although Mr John Bustard, a member of the Party, attended the Inquiry and asked a number of questions in an individual capacity.

16. Although there were a very large number of written representations from individuals and groups as referred to previously, these did not give rise to any substantive new points beyond those summarised in the foregoing paragraphs.

17. Although discussion of the issues at the Inquiry was wide ranging, there were naturally certain recurring points of dispute and I now propose to examine those in some detail. In doing so I will also set out my views in respect of those issues as obviously the view taken in respect thereof is relevant to my overall proposals, which I will outline in due course.

18. The first major issue was whether the Ards LGD wards of Ballygowan, Comber East, Comber North, Comber West, Killinchy, Lisbane and Scrabo should be joined to the bulk of Down LGD and part of Banbridge LGD in the proposed constituency of Mid Down.

In general those supporting the Provisional Recommendations obviously favoured such joinder. In particular, the Ulster Unionist Party outlined that there were links between these Ards LGD wards and the Down LGD area, including the town of Downpatrick. Reference was made to links for purposes of religious worship, education and the Orange Order. Mr Denis Stephens and Councillor Albert Colmer gave persuasive evidence of links between particularly the Comber area and parts of Down LGD. DUP agreed with the Ulster Unionist Party view, save that it considered that Scrabo ward should be in the proposed Castlereagh and Newtownards constituency rather than that of Mid Down. It considered Scrabo ward to be within the entity of Newtownards town and that it was also undesirable that it should be the only ward in the Newtownards DEA not included in the Castlereagh and Newtownards constituency.

In the view of those opposing the formation of the new constituency of Mid Down, and particularly Down District Council and South Down SDLP, any link between the said Ards LGD wards and the town of Downpatrick (the focus of the proposed new Mid Down constituency) was very weak and tenuous. Rather, they suggested that these seven Ards LGD wards were much more closely linked to Newtownards and even to Belfast than to Downpatrick.

After listening to the various arguments I was strongly persuaded that these seven Ards LGD wards are closely linked with Newtownards and its environs and that they have only a fairly tenuous connection with Downpatrick and its environs. I accept the DUP contention that Scrabo ward is virtually a physical part of Newtownards town and I cannot see any justification for putting it in a different constituency from the rest of the town. While Scrabo is the easiest example in that it has virtually no links with Downpatrick and extremely close links with Newtownards, whereas Comber, for example, on the other hand, has some links with Saintfield, Crossgar and even Downpatrick, nevertheless I consider that in general terms these wards look much more to Newtownards, Castlereagh and Belfast than to Downpatrick. One has only to consider employment, provision of hospital services, education and leisure to appreciate that the focus for these wards is away from rather than towards Downpatrick.

A further disadvantage in the Provisional Recommendations is that the placement of these seven Ards LGD wards in the proposed Mid Down constituency involved a further splitting of Ards LGD, so that under the said recommendations Ards LGD would be split between three constituencies. I note that Ards District Council has objected to such splitting in a letter to the Boundary Commission. While not bound to observe LGD boundaries, I do not consider that there is sufficient justification for such splitting in this instance.

I have had regard to the fact that there was at the time of the Stormont Parliament a Mid Down constituency, but I do not consider this to be of anything other than fairly marginal relevance, given that the boundaries of that constituency were significantly different to either the proposed Mid Down constituency boundaries or the present South Down constituency boundaries.

It is my view that the proposed alteration to the existing constituency boundaries by transferring these seven Ards LGD wards into the proposed Mid Down constituency will cause significant inconvenience to the electorate of these areas and will break strong existing local ties as aforesaid.

19. The second major issue was whether the nine Banbridge LGD wards of Ballyward, Bannside, Dromore North, Dromore South, Gransha, Katesbridge, Loughbrickland, Quilly and Rathfriland should be joined with the bulk of Down LGD in the proposed Mid Down constituency.

Once again, those parties favouring the Provisional Recommendations contended that there was a sufficient link between these wards and Downpatrick, the focal town of the proposed Mid Down constituency, to justify the joinder of these wards within that constituency. It was argued in particular by the Ulster Unionist Party that while there would always be grey areas, that the Provisional Recommendations were much superior to the existing constituency boundaries. It was contended by South Down SDLP that only three of the said nine wards had significant links with the bulk of Down LGD and in particular with Downpatrick, namely, the wards of Ballyward, Katesbridge and Rathfriland. Down District Council agreed with South Down SDLP save that it considered that Bannside also had sufficient links.

After careful consideration of the respective arguments, my view is that only three of the said wards have significant links with the bulk of Down LGD and in particular with Downpatrick namely, the wards of Ballyward, Katesbridge and Rathfriland. A respectable case may also be made for Bannside and even Loughbrickland, but ultimately I consider that those two wards looked too much towards Banbridge town to justify their linkage with Down LGD. As far as the wards of Dromore North and South, Quilly and Gransha are concerned, I consider that their focus is also towards Banbridge and indeed even towards Lisburn rather than towards Downpatrick.

There was considerable evidence at the Inquiry about Slieve Croob and on travelling in the area subsequently I was struck by the physical division between Downpatrick and these areas caused by Slieve Croob and by the relatively poor road system between Downpatrick and these areas.

The town of Dromore appears to be approximately half way between Lisburn and Banbridge and my impression is that the population of that town and of the wards surrounding it look towards those two centres, rather than towards Downpatrick. I consider that the wards of Dromore North, Dromore South, Quilly and Gransha could justifiably be placed in either the Upper Bann or the Lagan Valley constituency. In my proposals, which I will outline in due course, I have placed these four wards in the Lagan Valley constituency for purpose of keeping the constituency electorate in the Upper Bann constituency as close to the EQ as possible.

I consider that the wards of Loughbrickland and Bannside look more to Banbridge than to Downpatrick and should be in the Upper Bann constituency.

I recognise that an unfortunate consequence of my view of how these wards should be allocated is that Banbridge LGD would be split between three constituencies instead of between two constituencies as the Provisional Recommendations envisage. Nevertheless, Banbridge LGD is already split under both the existing constituency boundaries and the Provisional Recommendations, and there has been no objection from Banbridge District Council to such splitting.

Before leaving this issue, I would indicate that I support the submission of Councillor John Dobson of the Ulster Unionist Party that the DUP suggestion that the Ballydown ward of Banbridge LGD be separated from the rest of Banbridge urban entity should be rejected. I agree that the said Ballydown ward should be retained with the rest of Banbridge town in the Upper Bann constituency.

20. The third major issue was whether the wards of Donard, Murlough, Shimna and Tollymore should be split from the rest of Down LGD and joined with Newry and Mourne LGD to form the proposed new constituency of Newry and Mourne.

It was fairly common ground between the various parties that the Mournes area should be contained within the boundaries of one constituency, but there was considerable division between

them as to whether this Mournes area should be within a proposed new constituency centred on Newry and Newcastle as envisaged by the Provisional Recommendations or whether it should be in a constituency centred on Downpatrick and Newcastle as it is at present.

Down District Council, Newry and Mourne District Council, South Down SDLP and Newry and Armagh SDLP all favoured the retention of the Mournes area within the South Down constituency on the basis that it allowed for better organisation of the Mournes, better linkage with its catchment area and recognised the strong historical and existing links between Newcastle and its environs and Downpatrick and its environs.

On the other hand, the Ulster Unionist Party and the DUP supported the Provisional Recommendations and the splitting of these four wards from the rest of Down LGD. They contended that while there would always be grey areas when drawing a dividing line of this nature, it would be generally accepted that a line (in terms of where people began to look to the South rather than to the North for employment, recreation and services) ran approximately along the northern edge of the Mourne Mountains from around Newcastle to Hilltown. Reliance was placed by these parties on the contention that Kilkeel, for example, had much closer links with Newry than with Downpatrick and that it made sense for Kilkeel, Newcastle and the entire Mournes area to be linked with Newry rather than with Downpatrick.

In turning to outline my views on this issue, I firstly start with acceptance of the premise that the Mournes area should be within one constituency. It is a distinct physical unit with special needs and pressures. While an argument can be made for linking Newcastle and the Mournes area generally with Newry rather than with Downpatrick, I favour the retention of the link between Newcastle and the Mournes area of the one part and Downpatrick and its environs of the other part. The Provisional Recommendations envisage the splitting of Down LGD between two constituencies. As already indicated in the foregoing paragraphs, I accept that the Boundary Commission are not obliged to honour the boundaries of LGDs and some splitting is inevitable. However, I am influenced by the fact that Down District Council has consistently opposed any splitting of Down LGD and while the Council opposition is now in terms of a majority rather than of unanimity, nevertheless the reasons against splitting Down LGD remain as valid today as they were at the time of the previous Boundary Commission Inquiry in 1980 conducted by A. Hart BL, as he then was, when such a split was rejected. I accept that some LGDs must be split, but I see a clear and significant difference between confirming an already split LGD where there is little or no Council opposition to splitting as compared with creating a split in a previously unified LGD where the Council has consistently opposed splitting. I accept the contention that there are strong business and social ties which militate against splitting in the case of Down LGD.

Secondly, I accept the view expressed by Dr Neville Douglas, a Senior Lecturer at Queen's University, Belfast, with expertise in public policy and local government reform, that it would be inappropriate to cut the Mournes area off from a major part of its catchment and entrance area. He submitted that the Links Area (the corridor north of Newcastle between Slieve Croob and the sea) needed to be kept in the same constituency as the Mournes area if one wanted to formulate and implement a policy for the entire Mournes area, because the Links Area was the major entrance corridor for the Mournes.

Thirdly, I accept the Down District Council contention that the link between Newcastle and its environs of the one part and Downpatrick and its environs of the other part, is considerably stronger than the link between the former area and the Newry area. The roads between Newry and Newcastle are relatively poor and I accept that in terms of education, business ties, provision of hospital services, and planning developments, the links between the Downpatrick area and the Newcastle area are significantly greater than those between the Newry area and the Newcastle area. Evidence was given for example, that the Colleges of Further Education at Newcastle and

Down respectively have amalgamated and that the Newcastle area was very actively involved in the campaign to save the Down Group of Hospitals.

Fourthly, I do not consider that it would be desirable to have Newcastle in a different constituency from Castlewellan and Dundrum as these areas focus so heavily on Newcastle.

Fifthly, although there was an initial attraction in the Ulster Unionist Party argument that it would be best to have the Mournes area in a Newry and Mourne constituency, given that it was in a Newry and Mourne LGD, nevertheless the strength of this point was considerably diluted by evidence that Newry and Mourne District Council had a separate strategy for the Mournes area in which it co-operated with Down District Council. Indeed, in my view the presently blossoming arrangements for the Mournes area would be adversely affected if the Newcastle area was to be placed in a different constituency from the Downpatrick area.

I recognise the cogency of the arguments that, for example, Kilkeel's connection with Downpatrick is significantly weaker than its connection with Newry, but obviously the Kilkeel area is very closely linked with Newcastle and in my view it would be ludicrous to separate them. One will always be able to point to examples which are difficult to reconcile with the underlying principles and the point was validly made, for example, by the Ulster Unionist Party and DUP that Rostrevor and Warrenpoint looked much more to Newry than to Downpatrick. However, I recognise the long historical division of County Armagh and most of Newry town from the rest of County Down. This distinction was recognised in the Boundary Commission's Third Periodical Report in November 1982 and it remains valid.

I have also carefully considered the Ulster Unionist Party's contention that if one accepts that the entire Mournes area should be within one constituency then it would be better to split four wards from Down LGD and join them with Newry and Mourne LGD to achieve that purpose than to separate twelve or thirteen wards from Newry and Mourne LGD to join Down LGD as there is obviously a smaller population in the four Down LGD wards than in the 12 or 13 Newry and Mourne LGD wards. However, while there is an attraction in that contention, it is outweighed by the fact that firstly, Newry and Mourne District Council accepts and indeed desires such a split between its LGD, whereas Down District Council oppose a split in the Down LGD and, secondly, that Newry and Mourne LGD has been split between constituencies whereas Down LGD has been entirely within one constituency.

21. Having considered the aforesaid major specific areas of contention raised at the Inquiry, I now turn to consider whether in the overall context of the three constituencies under consideration in this report, the radical changes envisaged in the creation of the two new proposed constituencies of Mid Down and Newry and Mourne should be supported, or whether alterations are desirable. It is my strong view that less radical alterations to the existing constituencies are desirable and that the Provisional Recommendations should be altered to allow for same. In taking this view I am influenced not only by my views on the specific issues referred to in the foregoing paragraphs but by the following considerations:

(a) I consider that each of the three constituencies under consideration can achieve constituency electorates close to the EQ without the radical surgery envisaged by the Boundary Commission's proposals. In other words, I consider that it is possible to achieve satisfactory constituency electorate figures while giving greater recognition to the existing parliamentary constituency boundaries than is afforded by the Boundary Commission's proposals.

(b) There has been widespread opposition to the Commission's proposals within the affected areas. Indeed I believe the proposals for these areas engendered a greater volume of written opposition than was encountered in respect of any other area. I recognise that a considerable amount of the opposition has been motivated by the perception that the proposed changes would alter the nature of the political

representation for the affected areas (which is not a legitimate concern for the Boundary Commission) but nevertheless it is equally clear that this was not the sole motivation.

(c) Both the District Councils which would be most affected by the Commission's proposals are opposed to the proposals (Newry and Mourne and Down District Councils) and both Members of Parliament for the said areas (Mr McGrady and Mr Mallon) are also opposed to them.

(d) I consider that my proposed South Down and Newry and Armagh constituencies better accord with geographical features of the area than the Boundary Commission's proposals. In particular, I consider that the South Down constituency is a fairly integral geographic area with Strangford Lough at the North, Carlingford Lough to the South, the Mournes within and Newcastle and Downpatrick as the main towns.

(e) Given that the existing constituencies of Newry and Armagh and Upper Bann are and have been consistently close to the EQ and appear to operate quite satisfactorily as constituencies, I consider that it is undesirable that major changes be made to their boundaries if this can be avoided. I recognise that there is an excess in the electoral quota in the present South Down constituency, but I consider that this problem should be resolved as far as possible without impinging upon the said constituencies of Newry and Armagh and Upper Bann. In general terms, it would appear more satisfactory if the excess could be catered for to the north (ie in the Lagan Valley, North Down, Castlereagh and Newtownards and Belfast constituencies) where changes to the existing constituencies appear likely in any event due, *inter alia*, to population movement from Belfast to surrounding districts and towns.

(f) There was no strong evidence before me of any need to carry out radical changes to the existing boundaries, save insofar as it was necessary to do so for purposes of achieving constituency electorates close to the EQ. In other words, the existing boundaries appeared compatible with the good organisation of public services generally, including Health Boards, Educational Boards, Planning Departments and Leisure and Youth Services.

(g) There were significant historical arguments for the retention, as far as possible, of the existing constituencies of South Down and particularly of Newry and Armagh. In relation to Newry and Armagh, it was strongly contended that for centuries the towns of Newry and Armagh had been linked and that the existing constituencies largely followed the historical division between County Armagh and County Down. In fact the boundary of County Armagh divides Newry Town and it was as a result of the said Boundary Commission Report of 1982 that the desirability of retaining the historic linkage between Newry and Armagh by making the minor changes necessary to incorporate all of Newry town within the Newry and Armagh constituency was recognised.

(h) There were broadly similar proposals for constituencies of Mid Down and Newry and Armagh at the time of the said Inquiry conducted by Mr Hart in 1982 and I do not consider that there has been a sufficient change of circumstances to justify a change of view from the rejection expressed by him and encompassed in the said 1982 Boundary Commission report.

(i) While I accept that there are links between Dungannon and Armagh, in general terms I consider the links between Newry and Armagh to be significantly greater and established over a much longer period.

22. In outlining my views and in making my proposals, I should make it clear that I fully recognise that the Commission will not be considering my report in isolation, but rather that they will consider it in conjunction with the reports of the other assistant Commissioners upon the Inquiries conducted by them. The Commission will have to consider the effect of any recommendations by an assistant Commissioner for one constituency or group of constituencies on the recommendations of other assistant Commissioners for their areas of Inquiry before deciding whether to confirm or revise the Commission's overall plan for the whole Province.

I do not know what has been recommended by other assistant Commissioners and I recognise that if the Provisional Recommendations are endorsed in the reports of other assistant Commissioners, that it may be difficult or even impossible to accommodate any alterations I recommend, even if it was considered otherwise desirable to accommodate them.

Therefore, while I am mindful of the need to consider the effect of any alterations I suggest to the Provisional Recommendations on adjoining constituencies I am considerably limited in my ability to do so in respect of constituencies outside the three constituencies which are the subject of my Inquiry. Rather, I must leave to the Commission the onerous task of weighing the merit of, and if appropriate marrying, the recommendations from the various Inquiries.

23. As already indicated counter proposals to the Boundary Commission's recommendations for the whole Province were received from Sinn Fein, from Newry and Mourne District Council and from the Conservative Party. In relation to Sinn Fein's proposals for the creation of a new Newry/South Down constituency, a new Strangford constituency and a new Navan constituency, I reject the said proposals in respect of the area concerned in this report on the grounds that they would dismember the existing constituency boundaries which I believe should be largely retained for the reasons already given.

Newry and Mourne District Council's counter proposals leave the existing Newry and Armagh constituency boundaries largely untouched and make relatively minor changes to the existing South Down constituency boundaries but envisage the disappearance of an Upper Bann constituency due to the creation of a new Banbridge and Lurgan constituency. I do not accept these proposals as they involve the dismembering of Upper Bann which I believe should be retained and involve the division of Craigavon LGD with Portadown being in one constituency and Lurgan in another constituency.

The Conservative Party's counter proposals involve the removal of all the Banbridge LGD wards from the proposed Mid Down constituency and the addition of seven more Ards LGD wards together with one ward from North Down LGD; the addition of four Banbridge LGD wards to the proposed Newry and Mourne constituency; and the addition of the Banbridge LGD wards of Quilly and Loughbrickland to the proposed Upper Bann constituency. I reject the addition of the seven further Ards LGD wards and one North Down LGD ward for the same reasons as I oppose the Boundary Commission's proposal to put seven Ards LGD wards into the proposed Mid Down constituency. Furthermore, no evidence was put before me to justify the addition of Banbridge LGD wards to the proposed Newry and Mourne constituency. I agree that Loughbrickland should be in the Upper Bann constituency but I believe that Quilly, together with Gransha, Dromore North and Dromore South wards should be in the Lagan Valley constituency for the reasons already given.

24. I now set out in full my proposals for the composition of the three constituencies under consideration at my Inquiry:

South Down

This constituency should consist of the following wards:

The 23 Down Local Government District wards of -

Ardglass
Audley's Acre
Ballymaglave
Ballymote
Ballynahinch East
Castlewellan
Cathedral
Crossgar
Derryboy
Donard
Drumaness
Dundrum
Dunmore
Killough
Killyleagh
Kilmore
Murlough
Quoile
Saintfield
Seaforde
Shimna
Strangford
Tollymore

The 12 Newry and Mourne LGD wards of -

Annalong
Binnian
Burren and Kilbroney
Clonallan
Derryleckagh
Kilkeel Central
Kilkeel South
Lisnacree
Mayobridge
Rostrevor
Seaview
Spelga

The three Banbridge LGD wards of -

Ballyward
Katesbridge
Rathfriland

This constituency would then have an electorate of 69,751 which is within an acceptable tolerance of the EQ of 67,852.

Newry and Armagh

This constituency should consist of the following wards:

The 22 Armagh Local Government District wards of -

Abbey Park
Ballymartrim
Callan Bridge
Carrigatuke
Charlemont
Demesne
Derrynoose
Downs
Hamiltonsbawn
Hockley
Keady
Killeen
Killylea
Laurelvale
Loughgall
Markethill
Milford
Observatory
Poyntz Pass
Rich Hill
Tandragee
The Mall

The 18 Newry and Mourne Local Government District wards of -

Ballybot
Bessbrook
Carnlough
Creggan
Crossmaglen
Daisy Hill
Derrymore
Donaghmore
Drumalane
Drumgullion
Fathom
Forkhill
Newtownhamilton
Silver Bridge
St Patrick's
St Mary's
Tullyhappy
Windsor Hill

This constituency would then have an electorate of 70,404 which is within an acceptable tolerance of the EQ of 67,852.

Upper Bann

All the Craigavon Local Government District wards of:

Aghagallon
Annagh
Ballybay
Ballyoran
Bleary
Brownstown
Court
Church
Corcrain
Derrytrasna
Donaghcloney
Drumgask
Drumgor
Drumnamoe
Edenderry
Kernan
Killycomain
Knocknashane
Magheralin
Mourneview
Parklake
Taghnevan
Tavanagh
The Birches
Waringstown
Woodville

The ten Banbridge Local Government District wards of

Ballydown
Banbridge West
Bannside
Edenderry
Fort
Gilford
Lawrencetown
Loughbrickland
Seapatrick
The Cut

This constituency would then have an electorate of 70,593 which is within an acceptable tolerance of the EQ of 67,852.

25. I recognise that acceptance of my proposals would require that:

(a) the seven Ards LGD wards of Ballygowan, Comber East, Comber North, Comber West, Killinchy, Lisbane and Scrabo, and

(b) the said four Banbridge LGD wards of Dromore North, Dromore South, Gransha and Quilly

be accommodated outside the boundaries of the three constituencies proposed by me. I am conscious that this report may be viewed as unsatisfactory in that regard, in that it puts additional electoral population strains on other areas. However, it is an inevitable consequence of my brief which is limited to three constituencies compared with the Commission's responsibility for the whole Province. As I have already indicated, I fully recognise that it may be that my proposals will not find favour with the Commission either because of the difficulty of seeking to marry them with other proposals arising from the reports of the other assistant Commissioners, or because they are considered inappropriate or undesirable in any event. It is simply impossible for me to give specific proposals for how those wards should be accommodated as I do not know what alterations, if any, will be recommended or adopted as a result of other Inquiries. Therefore, in considering the effect of my proposals on adjoining constituencies, I limit my observations to the following general points:

(a) The said seven Ards LGD wards are closely linked to Newtownards and I consider that they should be accommodated within the proposed new constituency of Castlereagh and Newtownards if that constituency is created. I appreciate that the addition of the said seven wards would put the constituency electorate for Castlereagh and Newtownards well above the Boundary Commission's recommended tolerance of 7%, but it may be that in considering the overall picture the Commission will be able to achieve a constituency electorate within the recommended tolerance by transferring other wards out of the proposed Castlereagh and Newtownards constituency, such as the North Down LGD wards of Cultra, Holywood Demesne, Holywood Priory, and Loughview.

(b) I also recognise that the transfer of the four said Banbridge LGD wards to the Lagan Valley constituency would put the electorate of that constituency well above the Boundary Commission's recommended tolerance of 7%. It may be, however, that some wards could be transferred from that constituency if the Boundary Commission favoured my previously expressed general view that the excess electoral quota of the present South Down constituency should be catered for by the transfer of some wards from the Lagan Valley to one or more Belfast constituencies and the transfer of these four said Banbridge LGD wards from the South Down to the Lagan Valley constituency.

I further recognise that my proposals would render non-viable the Boundary Commission's proposed constituency of Blackwater in that I recommend the retention of the Armagh LGD wards within the Newry and Armagh constituency. It may be that this will cause difficulties with quotas in constituencies in the western part of the Province but such problems are not due to any excess in the electoral quota emanating from the three constituencies with which I have been concerned. Given the constraints on my brief and role to which I have previously referred I cannot deal with the knock-on effect of my proposals on adjoining constituencies in any more specific or detailed way.

26. I now turn to the question of names for the constituencies. If my proposals are accepted, then I do not see any case for a change in existing constituency names. Therefore, in the event that my proposals find favour, I propose that the names of South Down, Newry and Armagh and Upper Bann be retained. Various proposals as to names were made however, to cater for constituencies identical to or similar to those outlined for this area in the Provisional Recommendations:

(a) **Blackwater**
Sinn Fein suggested that the new constituency linking Dungannon and Armagh (and I ignore for the purposes of this issue, any differences in detail between Sinn Fein's proposals and the Boundary Commission's proposals for such constituency) be called Navan rather than Blackwater. Councillor Spiers of the Ulster Unionist Party said Armagh should be included in the name of this constituency and suggested either Armagh/Dungannon or Armagh/South Tyrone. His colleague, Mr Finch, suggested Armagh/South Tyrone. Armagh District Council submitted that the name Armagh should be contained in the name of this constituency. In the event that such a constituency is created, I believe there is a strong case for the name of Armagh being contained in the constituency name. I believe that Armagh and South Tyrone would be too easily confused with Fermanagh and South Tyrone and therefore I would support the suggestion of Councillor Spiers that the name be Armagh and Dungannon if such a constituency is created.

(b) **Newry and Mourne**
The Ulster Unionist Party suggested that this constituency, if created, should be called Armagh/Down. However, I consider that if this constituency is created then it will be based largely on the Newry and Mourne District Council area and it is appropriate that it should have that name, ie., Newry and Mourne.

(c) **Mid Down**
DUP thought this constituency could more appropriately be called "Strangford". However, no other support was expressed for this view and I consider that if this constituency is created then the proposed name of Mid Down should be adopted.

27. Before turning to summarise my recommendations I refer briefly to three further points:

(a) The question of whether there should be 17 or 18 Parliamentary seats for Northern Ireland was not canvassed in any detail at the Inquiry. All parties appeared to accept, or at least acknowledge, the fact that the Boundary Commission had received advice from Senior Crown Counsel that the number of seats could only be increased to 18 if that would reduce or alleviate difficulties experienced in applying the Rules for Redistribution of Seats on the basis of 17 constituencies. Therefore, I have not considered that issue and it would have been difficult for me to do so given that I am dealing with only three constituencies in any event.

(b) No submissions were made to me about the number of members to be returned by each constituency to any future Northern Ireland Assembly and accordingly I assume that there is general acceptance for the proposition that each constituency should return five members thereto.

(c) The Alliance submission referred to recommendations for reform of the current voting system. I considered this issue to be outside the scope of my Inquiry.

28. In conclusion therefore, I summarise my recommendations as follows:

(a) the constituencies of Newry and Armagh, South Down and Upper Bann should be composed as described at paragraph 24 above;

(b) each of the constituencies referred to above be designated as county constituencies;

(c) each of the said constituencies retain its existing name;

(d) the recommendations of the Boundary Commission be altered insofar as it is necessary to give effect to my said recommendations; and

(e) each of the three county constituencies return five members to any future Northern Ireland Assembly.

Finally I express my appreciation to all those who attended the Inquiry for the manner in which they presented their evidence and participated in the proceedings. Notwithstanding the sensitivity of the issues and strength of feeling involved, their willingness to abide by procedure and accept my rulings enabled the Inquiry to be conducted effectively and expeditiously. I am also very grateful for the advice, assistance and support given to me throughout by the Secretariat to the Commission without which the Inquiry would not have been possible.

BRIAN F. FEE

Assistant Commissioner
17 October, 1994

NAMES OF INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS SUBMITTING REPRESENTATIONS ON THE REVISED RECOMMENDATIONS

The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland
Ballymena Borough Council
Ballymoney Borough Council
Banbridge District Council
Belfast City Council
Mr J D Bustard
Conservative Political Centre Northern Ireland Area
Mr Albert J Cooke
Down District Council
Greater Twinbrook and Poleglass Community Forum
Mr Alan Johnston
Lisburn Borough Council
Mr Malachy McAnespie
Newry and Mourne District Council
Newtownabbey Borough Council
North Down Borough Council
North Down Conservative Association, Holywood Branch
Omagh District Council
Alderman Peter D Robinson MP (on behalf of a constituent)
Sinn Fein
Councillor Rev. Eric Smyth (on behalf of the Ulster Democratic Unionist Party, North Belfast Association)
Social Democratic and Labour Party
Social Democratic and Labour Party, Belfast District Executive
Social Democratic and Labour Party, Fermanagh & South Tyrone Constituency Council
Social Democratic and Labour Party, West Belfast Constituency Council
Strabane District Council
South Down Unionist Association
Ulster Democratic Unionist Party
Ulster Unionist Council

BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

REVISED RECOMMENDATIONS

The electorates of the proposed constituencies and of their constituent wards are listed below. The electorate is the number of persons whose names appear on the register of parliamentary electors in force on the enumeration date for the present review, 19th March 1993. The figures shown in brackets are the electorates of the proposed constituencies and their wards taken from the 1995 Register of Electors.

1. Belfast East borough constituency

The 11 Belfast local government district wards of:

Ballyhackamore	4555	(4565)	Knock	4126	(4062)
Ballymacarrett	3729	(3578)	Orangefield	4199	(4154)
Belmont	4468	(4407)	Stormont	4607	(4561)
Bloomfield	4201	(4166)	Sydenham	4001	(3879)
Cherryvalley	4334	(4351)	The Mount	4127	(4043)
Island	3779	(3617)			
Total			46,126	(45,383)	

The nine Castlereagh local government district wards of:

Cregagh	1802	(1745)	Lower Braniel	2011	(1985)
Downshire	1889	(1912)	Tullycarnet	2131	(1963)
Gilnahirk	2021	(2038)	Upper Braniel	1948	(1900)
Hillfoot	2250	(2313)	Wynchurch	1816	(1775)
Lisnasharragh	1887	(1806)			
Total			17,755	(17,437)	
Total Electorate			**63,881**	**(62,820)**	

2. Belfast North borough constituency

The 14 Belfast local government district wards of:

Ardoyne	4305	(4229)	Crumlin	4036	(4033)
Ballysillan	4356	(4253)	Duncairn	3628	(3405)
Bellevue	3706	(3594)	Fortwilliam	3769	(3778)
Castleview	3899	(3841)	Legoniel	4130	(4022)
Cavehill	3989	(3996)	New Lodge	4496	(4366)
Chichester Park	3994	(3923)	Water Works	4594	(4577)
Cliftonville	4246	(4057)	Woodvale	3824	(3594)
Total			56,972	(55,668)	

The five Newtownabbey local government district wards of:

Abbey	2335	(2368)	Valley	2456	(2421)
Coole	2251	(2095)	Whitehouse	2126	(2095)
Dunanney	1849	(1784)			
Total			11,017		(10,763)
Total Electorate			**67,989**		**(66,431)**

3. Belfast South borough constituency

The 13 Belfast local government district wards of:

Ballynafeigh	3995	(3875)	Ravenhill	4152	(4000)
Blackstaff	3729	(3508)	Rosetta	4131	(3902)
Botanic	3953	(3792)	Shaftesbury	4038	(3986)
Finaghy	3916	(3923)	Stranmillis	4003	(4320)
Malone	4342	(4306)	Upper Malone	3785	(3794)
Musgrave	4044	(4061)	Windsor	3998	(4001)
Woodstock	4046	(3818)			
Total			52,132		(51,286)

The six Castlereagh local government district wards of:

Beechill	2145	(2498)	Knockbracken	1842	(1894)
Cairnshill	2149	(2270)	Minnowburn	2108	(2032)
Galwally	1901	(1900)	Newtownbreda	2214	(2167)
Total			12,359		(12,761)
Total Electorate			**64,491**		**(64,047)**

4. Belfast West borough constituency

The 13 Belfast local government district wards of:

Andersonstown	4444	(4589)	Glencolin	4271	(4368)
Beechmount	4156	(3790)	Glen Road	4467	(4415)
Clonard	4119	(3936)	Highfield	3868	(3700)
Falls	4012	(3929)	Ladybrook	4469	(4595)
Falls Park	4506	(4502)	Shankill	3678	(3344)
Glencairn	3547	(3320)	Upper Springfield	3985	(4003)
Whiterock	3874	(3826)			
Total			53,396		(52,317)

The four Lisburn local government district wards of:

Collin Glen	2551	(2794)	Poleglass	2499	(2548)
Kilwee	2278	(2357)	Twinbrook	2216	(2158)
Total			9,544		(9,857)
Total Electorate			**62,940**		**(62,174)**

5. East Antrim county constituency

The whole of Larne local government district:

Antiville	1430	(1374)	Gardenmore	1640	(1660)
Ballycarry	1523	(1533)	Glenarm	1343	(1316)
Ballyloran	1442	(1376)	Glynn	1376	(1423)
Blackcave	1512	(1547)	Harbour	1504	(1480)
Carncastle	1550	(1693)	Island Magee	1539	(1631)
Carnlough	1478	(1454)	Kilwaughter	1623	(1637)
Central	1664	(1759)	Town Parks	1529	(1447)
Craigy Hill	1451	(1436)			
Total		22604	(22,766)		

The whole of Carrickfergus local government district:

Blackhead	1571	(1582)	Killycrot	1431	(1513)
Bluefield	1525	(1783)	Knockagh	1384	(1417)
Boneybefore	1430	(1469)	Love Lane	1290	(1285)
Burleigh Hill	1836	(2007)	Milebush	1498	(1471)
Clipperstown	1468	(1526)	Northland	1257	(1219)
Eden	1751	(1897)	Sunnylands	1322	(1325)
Gortalee	1248	(1193)	Victoria	1588	(1635)
Greenisland	1384	(1446)	Whitehead	1528	(1505)
Woodburn	1613	(1666)			
Total		25,124	(25,939)		

The four Newtownabbey local government district wards of:

Cloughfern	2277	(2290)	Monkstown	2243	(2214)
Jordanstown	2400	(2765)	Rostulla	2084	(2080)
Total		9,004	(9,349)		
Total Electorate		**56,732**	**(58,054)**		

6. East Londonderry county constituency

The whole of Coleraine local government district:

Agivey	1567	(1578)	Kilrea	1597	(1630)
Atlantic	1856	(1931)	Knocklynn	1658	(1669)
Ballysally	1655	(1775)	Macosquin	1634	(1584)
Castlerock	1799	(1819)	Mount Sandel	1555	(1529)
Central	1641	(1619)	Portstewart	1767	(1737)
Churchland	1756	(1671)	Ringsend	1533	(1544)
Cross Glebe	1639	(1662)	Royal Portrush	1788	(1780)
Dundooan	1644	(1735)	Strand	1674	(1751)
Dunluce	1602	(1654)	The Cuts	1944	(2310)
Garvagh	1781	(1783)	University	1554	(1633)
Hopefield	1843	(1946)	Waterside	1841	(1894)
Total		37,328	(38,234)		

The whole of Limavady local government district:

Aghanloo	1196	(1372)
Ballykelly	1219	(1228)
Coolessan	1289	(1294)
Dungiven	1351	(1342)
Enagh	1725	(1948)
Feeny	1205	(1216)
Forest	1374	(1403)
Glack	1239	(1266)
Gresteel	1432	(1462)
Greystone	1472	(1361)
Magilligan	1234	(1284)
Rathbrady	1403	(1411)
Roeside	1195	(1184)
The Highlands	1143	(1164)
Upper Glenshane	1218	(1249)
Total	19,695	(20,184)
Total Electorate	**57,023**	**(58,418)**

7. Fermanagh and South Tyrone county constituency

The whole of Fermanagh local government district area:

Ballinamallard	1567	(1577)
Belcoo and Garrison	1661	(1717)
Belleek and Boa	1632	(1659)
Boho, Cleenish and Letterbreen	1809	(1835)
Brookeborough	1669	(1712)
Castlecoole	1989	(2256)
Derrygonnelly	1764	(1849)
Derrylin	1600	(1628)
Devenish	1779	(1741)
Donagh	1620	(1622)
Erne	1814	(1806)
Florence Court and Kinawley	1758	(1790)
Irvinestown	1619	(1627)
Kesh, Ederney and Lack	2132	(2171)
Lisbellaw	1683	(1705)
Lisnarrick	1352	(1340)
Lisnaskea	1866	(1931)
Maguire's Bridge	1687	(1697)
Newtownbutler	1766	(1794)
Portora	1840	(1875)
Rosslea	1654	(1669)
Rossorry	1732	(1691)
Tempo	1627	(1644)
Total	39,620	(40,336)

The 15 Dungannon local government district wards of:

Augher	1402	(1392)
Aughnacloy	1463	(1460)
Ballygawley	1516	(1540)
Ballysaggart	1617	(1562)
Benburb	1527	(1515)
Caledon	1520	(1550)
Castlecaulfield	1601	(1644)
Clogher	1410	(1452)
Coolhill	1446	(1481)
Drumglass	1340	(1335)
Fivemiletown	1419	(1433)
Killyman	1520	(1555)
Killymeal	1441	(1483)
Moy	1527	(1526)
Moygashel	1355	(1422)
Mullaghmore	1366	(1323)
Total	23,470	(23,673)
Total Electorate	**63,090**	**(64,009)**

8. Foyle county constituency

The whole of Derry local government district:

Altnagelvin	2341	(2621)	Enagh	2262	(2179)
Ballynashallog	2501	(2720)	Foyle Springs	2316	(2453)
Banagher	1911	(1960)	Holly Mount	1995	(2213)
Beechwood	2018	(2002)	Kilfennan	2197	(2235)
Brandywell	1967	(1932)	Lisnagelvin	2308	(2502)
Carn Hill	2144	(2272)	New Buildings	2241	(2363)
Caw	2000	(1964)	Pennyburn	2400	(2460)
Claudy	1949	(2058)	Rosemount	2155	(2163)
Clondermot	1986	(2073)	Springtown	2257	(2258)
Creggan Central	2003	(1994)	Shantallow East	2060	(2024)
Creggan South	1851	(1794)	Shantallow West	2173	(2500)
Crevagh	2482	(2623)	Strand	2296	(2389)
Culmore	2308	(2746)	The Diamond	1966	(1887)
Ebrington	2041	(2004)	Victoria	2034	(2039)
Eglinton	2167	(2305)	Westland	1870	(1872)
Total			64,199	(66,605)	
Total Electorate			**64,199**	**(66,605)**	

9. Lagan Valley county constituency

The 26 Lisburn local government district wards of:

Ballinderry	2376	(2486)	Hillsborough	2549	(2608)
Ballymacbrennan	2367	(2411)	Knockmore	2203	(2187)
Ballymacash	2376	(2594)	Lagan Valley	2435	(2370)
Ballymacoss	2610	(2922)	Lambeg	2162	(2192)
Blaris	2421	(2436)	Lisnagarvey	2326	(2330)
Derryaghy	2315	(2653)	Maghaberry	2288	(2367)
Dromara	2548	(2637)	Magheralave	2232	(2249)
Drumbo	2406	(2418)	Maze	2533	(2607)
Dunmurry	2307	(2658)	Moira	2499	(2720)
Glenavy	2554	(2695)	Old Warren	2092	(1968)
Harmony Hill	2360	(2340)	Seymour Hill	2106	(2032)
Hilden	2357	(2245)	Tonagh	2149	(2100)
Hillhall	2274	(2223)	Wallace Park	2279	(2280)
Total			61,124	(62,728)	

The four Banbridge local government district wards of:

Dromore North	1759	(1763)	Gransha	1521	(1568)
Dromore South	1583	(1677)	Quilly	1564	(1585)
Total			6,427	(6,593)	
Total Electorate			**67,551**	**(69,321)**	

10. Mid Ulster county constituency

The whole of Cookstown local government district:

Ardboe	1475	(1507)	Newbuildings	1402	(1388)
Coagh	1298	(1324)	Oaklands	1240	(1227)
Dunnamore	1323	(1365)	Oldtown	1361	(1362)
Gortalowry	1427	(1480)	Pomeroy	1320	(1336)
Killycolpy	1440	(1482)	Sandholes	1264	(1294)
Killymoon	1434	(1463)	Stewartstown	1257	(1257)
Lissan	1279	(1305)	The Loop	1488	(1498)
Moneymore	1330	(1346)	Tullagh	1525	(1596)
Total		21,863	(22,230)		

The whole of Magherafelt local government district:

Ballymaguigan	1538	(1575)	Lower Glenshane	1700	(1812)
Bellaghy	1615	(1647)	Maghera	1719	(1678)
Castledawson	1678	(1704)	Swatragh	1787	(1777)
Draperstown	1628	(1649)	Tobermore	1486	(1496)
Glebe	1496	(1747)	Town Parks East	1694	(1719)
Gulladuff	1631	(1641)	Town Parks West	1650	(1617)
Knockcloghrim	1676	(1625)	Upperlands	1478	(1509)
Lecumpher	1462	(1506)	Valley	1635	(1635)
Total		25,873	(26,337)		

The six Dungannon local government district wards of:

Altmore	1506	(1515)	Coalisland West and Newmills	1509	(1495)
Coalisland North	1599	(1636)	Donaghmore	1495	(1516)
Coalisland South	1514	(1657)	Washing Bay	1576	(1640)
Total		9,199	(9,459)		
Total Electorate		**56,935**	**(58,026)**		

11. Newry and Armagh county constituency

The whole of Armagh local government district:

Abbey Park	1425	(1471)	Killeen	1707	(1765)
Ballymartrim	1648	(1698)	Killylea	1565	(1587)
Callan Bridge	1682	(1624)	Laurelvale	1663	(1719)
Carrigatuke	1543	(1569)	Loughgall	1743	(1763)
Charlemont	1656	(1694)	Markethill	1726	(1727)
Derrynoose	1551	(1621)	Milford	1533	(I585)
Demesne	1630	(1666)	Observatory	1801	(1791)
Downs	1526	(1714)	Poyntz Pass	1661	(1667)
Hamiltonsbawn	1853	(1877)	Rich Hill	1859	(1971)
Hockley	1785	(1790)	Tandragee	1819	(1895)
Keady	1670	(1629)	The Mall	1662	(1634)
Total		36,708	(37,457)		

The 17 Newry and Mourne local government district wards of:

Ballybot	1845	(1784)	Fathom	1858	(1919)
Bessbrook	1737	(1775)	Forkhill	2090	(2144)
Camlough	1766	(1878)	Newtownhamilton	1691	(1706)
Creggan	1700	(1781)	Silver Bridge	1893	(1950)
Crossmaglen	1772	(1811)	St Mary's	1918	(1877)
Daisy Hill	1920	(1904)	St Patrick's	2168	(2178)
Derrymore	1843	(1848)	Tullyhappy	1749	(1788)
Drumgullion	2038	(2124)	Windsor Hill	1993	(2065)
Drumalane	1967	(1955)			

Total	31,948	(32,487)
Total Electorate	**68,656**	**(69,944)**

12. North Antrim county constituency

The whole of Ballymena local government district:

Academy	1668	(1757)	Fair Green	1733	(1662)
Ahoghill	1981	(2168)	Galgorm	1714	(1796)
Ardeevin	1893	(1815)	Glenravel	1832	(1847)
Ballee	1752	(1749)	Glenwhirry	1815	(1862)
Ballykeel	1668	(1613)	Grange	1833	(1870)
Ballyloughan	1737	(1813)	Harryville	1710	(1693)
Broughshane	1865	(1890)	Kells	1954	(2030)
Castle Demesne	1731	(1788)	Moat	1581	(1543)
Craigywarren	1748	(1752)	Park	1708	(1712)
Cullybackey	1930	(1939)	Portglenone	1843	(1885)
Dunclug	1744	(1674)	Slemish	1624	(1616)
Dunminning	1732	(1751)	Summerfield	1844	(1913)

Total	42,640	(43,138)

The whole of Ballymoney local government district:

Ballyhoe and Corkey	1023	(1051)	Killoquin Lower	1107	(1127)
Benvardin	1056	(1101)	Killoquin Upper	1050	(1062)
Carnany	1189	(1243)	Knockaholet	1069	(1077)
Clogh Mills	1130	(1173)	Newhill	1101	(1082)
Dervock	1086	(1095)	Route	1156	(1142)
Dunloy	1120	(1151)	Seacon	1279	(1315)
Fairhill	1180	(1166)	Stranocum	1026	(1010)
Glebe	1244	(1268)	The Vow	1049	(1044)

Total	17,865	(18,107)

The whole of Moyle local government district:

Armoy	653	(666)	Glenariff	852	(900)
Ballylough	648	(677)	Glendun	774	(797)
Bonamargy and Rathlin	793	(834)	Glenshesk	673	(665)
Bushmills	661	(683)	Glentaisie	668	(671)
Carnmoon	637	(627)	Kinbane	663	(670)
Dalriada	834	(909)	Knocklayd	719	(712)
Dunseverick	633	(608)	Moss-side and Moyarget	611	(605)
Glenaan	891	(917)			

Total	10,710	(10,941)
Total Electorate	**71,215**	**(72,186)**

13. North Down county constituency

The whole of North Down local government district:

Ballycrochan	2706	(2968)	Cultra	2057	(2032)
Ballyholme	2009	(2039)	Dufferin	2046	(2034)
Ballymaconnell	2210	(2252)	Groomsport	2232	(2275)
Ballymagee	2204	(2315)	Harbour	2147	(2221)
Bangor Castle	2183	(2199)	Holywood Demesne	2235	(2314)
Bloomfield	2323	(2428)	Holywood Priory	2023	(2053)
Broadway	2343	(2355)	Loughview	2161	(2092)
Bryansburn	2351	(2322)	Princetown	2216	(2260)
Churchill	2336	(2322)	Rathgael	2056	(2041)
Clandeboye	2255	(2356)	Silverstream	2102	(2061)
Conlig	2284	(2465)	Spring Hill	2306	(2375)
Craigavad	2084	(2071)	Whitehill	2149	(2116)
Crawfordsburn	2044	(2112)			

Total	55,062	(56,078)

The three Ards local government district wards of:

Donaghadee North	2372	(2415)	Millisle	2113	(2218)
Donaghadee South	2198	(2234)			

Total	6,683	(6,867)
Total Electorate	**61,745**	**(62,945)**

14. South Antrim county constituency

The whole of Antrim local government district:

Aldergrove	1649	(1686)	Massereene	1730	(1766)
Balloo	1501	(1461)	Parkgate	1500	(1571)
Ballycraigy	1598	(1631)	Randalstown	1548	(1681)
Clady	1621	(1741)	Shilvodan	1505	(1522)
Cranfield	1598	(1620)	Springfarm	1882	(1945)
Crumlin	1903	(2077)	Steeple	1554	(1477)
Drumanaway	1507	(1555)	Stiles	1695	(1705)
Farranshane	1565	(1559)	Templepatrick	1747	(1798)
Fountain Hill	1752	(1780)	Toome	1568	(1618)
Greystone	1535	(1599)			

Total	30,958	(31,792)

The 16 Newtownabbey local government district wards of:

Ballyclare North	2363	(2476)	Collinbridge	2153	(2238)
Ballyclare South	2269	(2316)	Doagh	2099	(2145)
Ballyduff	2305	(2355)	Glebe	2317	(2448)
Ballyhenry	2387	(2394)	Glengormley	2338	(2306)
Ballynure	1850	(1945)	Hawthorne	1953	(1930)
Ballyrobert	2701	(2774)	Hightown	2092	(2081)
Burnthill	2339	(2317)	Mallusk	2372	(2840)
Carnmoney	2280	(2267)	Mossley	2269	(2244)

Total	36,087	(37,076)
Total Electorate	**67,045**	**(68,868)**

15. South Down county constituency

The 20 Down local government district wards of:

Ardglass	1820	(1895)	Dundrum	1639	(1674)
Audley's Acre	1700	(1804)	Dunmore	1774	(1838)
Ballymaglave	1836	(1833)	Killough	1762	(1798)
Ballymote	1703	(1604)	Kilmore	2018	(2091)
Ballynahinch East	1798	(1824)	Murlough	1694	(1705)
Castlewellan	1798	(1717)	Quoile	1907	(1866)
Cathedral	1832	(1826)	Seaforde	1676	(1743)
Crossgar	1896	(1927)	Shimna	1783	(1861)
Donard	1786	(1960)	Strangford	1725	(1789)
Drumaness	1974	(2018)	Tollymore	1611	(1818)

Total	35,732	(36,591)

The four Banbridge local government district wards of:

Ballyward	1561	(1580)	Katesbridge	1545	(1537)
Bannside	1514	(1501)	Rathfriland	1741	(1760)

Total	6,361	(6,378)

The 13 Newry and Mourne local government district wards of:

Annalong	1935	(1958)	Kilkeel Central	2307	(2389)
Binnian	1749	(1761)	Kilkeel South	2135	(2149)
Burren and Kilbroney	1822	(1947)	Lisnacree	1704	(1737)
Clonallan	2217	(2393)	Mayobridge	1837	(1891)
Derryleckagh	2063	(2150)	Rostrevor	1992	(2105)
Donaghmore	1748	(1766)	Seaview	2145	(2117)
Spelga	1769	(1799)			

Total	25,423	(26,162)
Total Electorate	**67,516**	**(69,131)**

16. Strangford county constituency

The eight Castlereagh local government district wards of:

Ballyhanwood	2468	(2469)	Dundonald	2057	(2312)
Carrowreagh	2136	(2309)	Enler	2254	(2125)
Carryduff East	2311	(2493)	Graham's Bridge	2302	(2236)
Carryduff West	1903	(2089)	Moneyreagh	2455	(2599)

Total	17,886	(18,632)

The three Down local government district wards of:

Derryboy	1809	(1889)	Saintfield	1842	(1953)
Killyleagh	1846	(1864)			

Total	5,497	(5,706)

The 20 Ards local government district wards of:

Ballygowan	2203	(2269)	Gregstown	2407	(2484)
Ballyrainey	2067	(2061)	Killinchy	2012	(2028)
Ballywalter	2118	(2260)	Kircubbin	2040	(2095)
Bradshaw's Brae	2297	(2375)	Lisbane	2020	(2071)
Carrowdore	1989	(2008)	Loughries	2279	(2371)
Central	2149	(2125)	Movilla	2325	(2567)
Comber East	2126	(2115)	Portaferry	2186	(2268)
Comber North	1933	(1956)	Portavogie	2256	(2277)
Comber West	2314	(2377)	Scrabo	1827	(1810)
Glen	2100	(2130)	Whitespots	2389	(2541)

Total	43,037	(44,188)
Total Electorate	**66,420**	**(68,526)**

17. Upper Bann county constituency

The whole of Craigavon local government district:

Annagh	1895	(1876)	Drumnamoe	2143	(2112)
Aghagallon	2282	(2363)	Edenderry	2350	(2443)
Ballybay	1879	(1814)	Kernan	2239	(2359)
Ballyoran	1910	(1910)	Killycomain	2061	(2028)
Bleary	2250	(2348)	Knocknashane	2154	(2233)
Brownstown	2400	(2425)	Magheralin	2177	(2290)
Corcrain	1989	(1956)	Mourneview	1919	(1944)
Court	2256	(2246)	Parklake	1962	(2030)
Church	1937	(1867)	Taghnevan	2078	(2102)
Derrytrasna	2359	(2447)	Tavanagh	1897	(1868)
Donaghcloney	1799	(1918)	The Birches	2073	(2080)
Drumgask	2153	(2089)	Waringstown	2179	(2218)
Drumgor	2139	(2091)	Woodville	2334	(2379)
Total			54,814	(55,436)	

The nine Banbridge local government district wards of:

Ballydown	1692	(1876)	Lawrencetown	1542	(1551)
Banbridge West	1723	(1724)	Loughbrickland	1575	(1575)
Edenderry	1578	(1675)	Seapatrick	1503	(1521)
Fort	1536	(1695)	The Cut	1599	(1556)
Gilford	1517	(1501)			
Total			14,265	(14,674)	
Total Electorate			**69,079**	**(70,110)**	

18. West Tyrone county constituency

The whole of Omagh local government district:

Beragh	1477	(1477)	Gortin	1361	(1375)
Camowen	1521	(1562)	Gortrush	1634	(1704)
Clanabogan	1543	(1613)	Lisanelly	1533	(1475)
Coolnagard	1683	(1683)	Killyclogher	1434	(1462)
Dergmoney	1594	(1535)	Newtownsaville	1492	(1511)
Dromore	1458	(1481)	Owenkillew	1391	(1416)
Drumnakilly	1584	(1577)	Sixmilecross	1393	(1436)
Drumquin	1436	(1457)	Strule	1396	(1376)
Drumragh	1582	(1704)	Termon	1485	(1544)
Fairy Water	1409	(1411)	Trillick	1490	(1511)
Fintona	1523	(1498)			
Total			31,419	(31,808)	

The whole of Strabane local government district:

Artigarvan	1573	(1643)	Newtownstewart	1579	(1596)
Ballycolman	1568	(1598)	North	1673	(1656)
Clare	1726	(1745)	Plumbridge	1447	(1469)
Castlederg	1566	(1561)	Sion Mills	1516	(1520)
Dunnamanagh	1483	(1500)	Slievekirk	1494	(1546)
East	1687	(1725)	South	1798	(1846)
Finn	1552	(1597)	Victoria Bridge	1530	(1539)
Glenderg	1665	(1732)	West	1694	(1727)

Total	25,551	(26,000)
Total Electorate	**56,970**	**(57,808)**

TOTAL NORTHERN IRELAND ELECTORATE	**1,153,477**	**(1,169,423)**

PROPOSED CONSTITUENCIES AND ELECTORATES

Recommended Name	A: Electorate 19 March 1993	A: % Deviation from *Electoral Quota (67,852)	B: % Deviation from †Electoral Average (64,082)	C: Electorate 1995 Register of Electors	C: % Deviation from †Electoral Average (64,968)
Belfast East	63,881	- 5.9	- 0.3	62,820	- 3.3
Belfast North	67,989	+ 0.2	+ 6.1	66,431	+ 2.3
Belfast South	64,491	- 5.0	- 0.6	64,047	- 1.4
Belfast West	62,940	- 7.2	- 1.8	62,174	- 4.3
East Antrim	56,732	- 16.4	- 11.5	58,054	- 10.6
East Londonderry	57,023	- 16.0	- 11.0	58,418	- 10.1
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	63,090	- 7.0	- 1.5	64,009	- 1.5
Foyle	64,199	- 5.4	+ 0.2	66,605	+ 2.5
Lagan Valley	67,551	- 0.4	+ 5.4	69,321	+ 6.7
Mid Ulster	56,935	- 16.1	- 11.2	58,026	- 10.7
Newry and Armagh	68,656	+ 1.2	+ 7.1	69,944	+ 7.7
North Antrim	71,215	+ 5.0	+ 11.1	72,186	+ 11.1
North Down	61,745	- 9.0	- 3.6	62,945	- 3.1
South Antrim	67,045	- 1.2	+ 4.6	68,868	+ 6.0
South Down	67,516	- 0.5	+ 5.4	69,131	+ 6.4
Strangford	66,420	- 2.1	+ 3.6	68,526	+ 5.5
Upper Bann	69,079	+ 1.8	+ 7.8	70,110	+ 7.9
West Tyrone	56,970	- 16.0	- 11.1	57,808	- 11.0
Totals	1,153,477			1,169,423	

* The Electoral Quota is calculated by dividing the total number of parliamentary electors in Northern Ireland on the enumeration date for the purposes of the Review by the number of existing constituencies. The total number of parliamentary electors in Northern Ireland on the enumeration date, 19 March 1993, was 1,153,477. The number of constituencies was 17 and the Electoral Quota is therefore 67,852.

† The Electoral average is calculated by dividing the total number of parliamentary electors in Northern Ireland on the relevant date by the number of constituencies now proposed by the Commission. The number of constituencies now proposed by the Commission is 18 and the electoral averages on 19 March 1993 and at the time the 1995 Register of Electors was compiled and published on 15 February 1995 were therefore 64,082 and 64,968 respectively.

UNITED KINGDOM PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

This map displays the boundaries of constituencies in Northern Ireland and their names.

Legend	
New Parliamentary constituency boundary and name	MID ULSTER
Previous Parliamentary constituency boundary	
Local Government District boundary and name	ARMAGH LGD
Ward boundary and name	SLEMISH

Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland 1995

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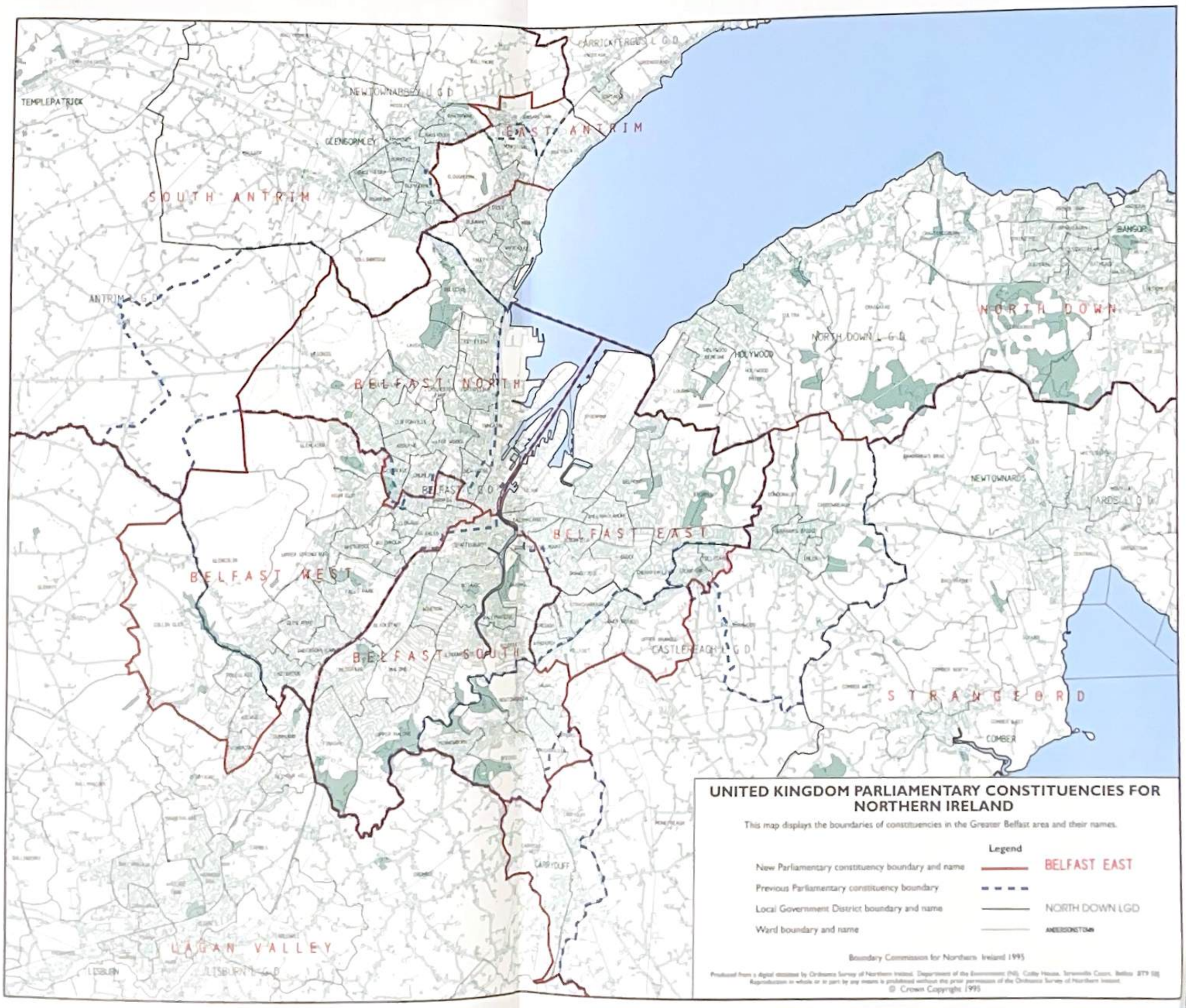

UNITED KINGDOM PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

This map displays the boundaries of constituencies in the Greater Belfast area and their names.

Legend	
New Parliamentary constituency boundary and name	BELFAST EAST
Previous Parliamentary constituency boundary	
Local Government District boundary and name	NORTH DOWN LGD
Ward boundary and name	ANDERSONSTOWN

Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland 1995

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BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Second Supplementary Report

on

the number of members to be returned

to the Northern Ireland Assembly

by each parliamentary constituency

Introduction

1. In addition to the requirement under the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 to make periodical reports showing the parliamentary constituencies into which it is recommended that Northern Ireland should be divided, the Commission are also required by section 28(2) of the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973 to submit a supplementary report showing the number of members which it is recommended should be returned to the Northern lreland Assembly by each proposed constituency.

2. The Commission submitted their First Supplementary Report when they made their Third Periodical Report in 1982.[1] In that supplementary report the Commission recommended that each of the 17 proposed parliamentary constituencies should return five members to the Northern Ireland Assembly and Parliament accepted this recommendation.[2]

3. The number of members of the Assembly is therefore currently fixed at 85.[3] The Commission have the power to recommend that the number of members should be altered but that power is subject to the limitation that they are not to make a recommendation whose effect would be substantially to alter the number of members. The Commission's recommendations must also be such as to secure, so far as is practicable, that the ratio of the electorate to the number of members to be returned is the same for each constituency.[4]

4. The last elections to the Northern lreland Assembly were held in October 1982. Although the Assembly was dissolved in June 1986, this has not affected the Commission's statutory task and the Commission are required to review and to recommend the total number of members to be elected to the Assembly, and the distribution of that number of members among the parliamentary constituencies.

5. Since the Commission last reported there has been an important change in legislation affecting the franchise for elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly. In the Commission's last report they drew attention to the uncertainty there was as to which electorate they should use as the basis for their calculations, and whether this should be the electorate for local authority or for parliamentary elections. The difference on the relevant date for the purpose of the last review was some 3,500 electors and the Commission decided that the number of electors registered to vote at local authority elections was the appropriate one. Article 3 of the Northern Ireland Assembly Elections Order 1982[5] now provides that those entitled to vote at elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly shall be parliamentary electors with the exclusion of those registered in pursuance of an overseas elector's declaration but with the addition of peers. The difference in the number of electors registered in Northern Ireland to vote at parliamentary and at Assembly elections is therefore now very small and, on the enumeration date for the present Review, (19 March 1993) the difference was only 99.

Provisional and Revised Recommendations

6. In the course of consulting the main political parties in Northern lreland on broad issues of policy at meetings held in April, May and June 1993, some parties felt that parliamentary constituencies should return between four and six members to the Northern lreland Assembly and other parties felt that each constituency should return the same number. There was broad agreement that the present overall number of members of the Assembly was about right.

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1 *Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland Third Periodical Report on Parliamentary Constituencies and First Supplementary Report on the Number of Members to be returned to the Northern Ireland Assembly by each of those Constituencies* (Cmnd. 8753, November 1982).

2 Parliamentary Constituencies (Northern Ireland) Order 1982.

3 Section 1(1) of the Northern Ireland Assembly Act 1973, as amended by article 3 of the Parliamentary Constituencies (Northern Ireland) Order l982.

4 Section 28(3) of the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973 .

5 As substituted by article 4 of the Northern Ireland Assembly Elections (Amendment) Order 1986.

7. In making their recommendations, the Commission are required to follow the same procedures for publishing their Provisional Recommendations and for inviting representations as are observed in the Review of parliamentary constituencies. The Commission's Provisional Recommendations announced on 20 January and published on 27 January 1994 were that each of the 17 constituencies proposed at that time should return five members to the Assembly, and that the Assembly should continue to have 85 members.

8. Anyone or any organisation with an interest in the proposals was encouraged to make representations to the Commission by the prescribed date of 28 February 1994. Few of the representations received referred to the Assembly, and none objected to the proposed distribution of Assembly seats.

9. It was open to anyone or any organisation to express their views on the proposed distribution of Assembly seats at any of the five public Local Inquiries held during May and June 1994 which considered representations in relation to the number, boundaries and names of parliamentary constituencies. However, no one questioned the Commission's recommendations and none of the assistant Commissioners subsequently recommended any change be made to the proposal that constituencies should each return five members to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

10. The Commission gave further consideration to the distribution of Northern Ireland Assembly seats in the light of the decision to publish Revised Recommendations which proposed that the number of constituencies be increased to 18. The Commission considered that variations in the size of electorates of the proposed 18 constituencies and in the number of electors entitled to vote at Northern Ireland Assembly elections[1] fell within acceptable limits. The Commission therefore concluded that it was reasonable to recommend that each constituency should return the same number of members to the Assembly and that each constituency should return five members. The Assembly would therefore comprise 90 members, an increase of five members, which in the opinion of the Commission is not a substantial increase.

11. The Commission's proposals were published on 25 January 1995 and notice of the Revised Recommendations appeared in the Belfast Telegraph, Irish News and News Letter newspapers. Notice of the revision of the Provisional Recommendations also appeared in the Belfast Gazette on 27 January 1995.

Representations

12. The Revised Recommendations attracted representations from the Ulster Unionist Council, Ballymena Borough Council and Sinn Fein.

13. In their submission, the UUC felt that the size of deviation in constituency electorates from the electoral average had implications for the proposal that each constituency should return five members to the Assembly. Ballymena Borough Council expressed the concern that by virtue of the size of electorate of the proposed North Antrim constituency, the quota to achieve election to the Assembly would be higher in that constituency than in any other, and that would have an effect on minority parties in the area. The Commission therefore gave further consideration to the variations in the size of proposed constituency electorates and whether some constituencies should return less than five members to the Assembly and others more than that number. In so doing, the Commission had regard to the published 1995 Register of Electors eligible to vote at elections to the Assembly[2]. The Register confirmed that for the purpose of elections to the Assembly, the constituencies proposed by the Commission varied in size of electorate from

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1 The number of electors entitled to vote at elections to a Northern Ireland Assembly on the enumeration date for the purposes of the present Review was 1,153,378.

2. The total number of eligible Northern Ireland Assembly electors on 16 February 1995 was 1,169,353.

11.1% above the electoral average (the proposed constituency of North Antrim) to 11% below it (the proposed constituency of West Tyrone). The Commission decided that, in relation to these two representations, the overall variations in the size of proposed constituency electorates fell within acceptable limits and it would therefore be appropriate for each constituency to return the same number of members to the Assembly.

14. In their representations, Sinn Fein felt that the outcome of Assembly elections based on the proposed constituency boundaries would not reflect reality. The Commission inferred from this that it was the opinion of Sinn Fein that elections on the basis of the proposed constituencies would not have a proportionate result for political parties given their respective polling strengths. This is not something which the Commission could take into account when formulating their recommendations.

Final Recommendation

15. Accordingly, the Commission announced on 24 March 1995 their decision not to modify their Revised Recommendations or cause a further Local Inquiry or Inquiries to be held. All those who had submitted representations were notified of the decision.

16. The Commission therefore recommend that each of the proposed 18 parliamentary constituencies as defined in their Fourth Periodical Report should return five members to the Northern Ireland Assembly, thereby increasing the size of the Assembly from 85 to 90 members.

John K. Pringle
Deputy Chairman

John R. Fisher
Secretary to the Commission

David Clement

George Duffy

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